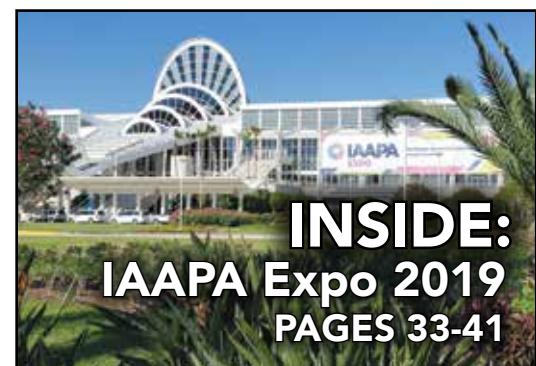


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Amusement TODAY

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IAAPA Expo 2019
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San Antonio welcomes IAFE, SLA for second year

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — The IAFE and the SLA were back in San Antonio for their annual early-December conventions. The **Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center** and the fourth floor of the **Hyatt Regency San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel** were the respective locations.

Over two-and-a-half days, 272 different vendors utilized 385 available spaces at the 129th IAFE (International Association of Fairs & Expositions) show with 43 exhibitors participating in the 16th SLA (Showmen's League of America) exhibitor's lounge trade show. Total attendance was nearly 3,000 for IAFE and more than 400 for SLA. The IAFE show had a preponderance of entertainment exhibitors followed by insurance, rental companies, and ticketing and technology service vendors. Next door, the two-day SLA show offered ride brokers and manufacturers along with related services at their tabletop show.

"I think the 2019 IAFE trade show and convention has been spectacular. We were really excited coming into this, because we had [the] trade show totally sold out," said **Marla Calico**, IAFE president and CEO. "Most days we were getting calls to bring in more chairs to the educational sessions.

► See IAFE, page 4



Nearly 3,000 people attended the IAFE trade show and convention. The 2½ day show had 272 exhibitors occupying 385 spaces at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. It was the second time in four years the show was held in San Antonio. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Disney's Hollywood Studios takes guests face-to-face with Kylo Ren and the First Order aboard a Star Destroyer on the groundbreaking attraction Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD

Disney strikes back with E-ticket Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance, the new attraction that opened at **Disney's Hollywood Studios** (in Central Florida) in early December and opens this month at **Disneyland** in Southern California, a mesmerizing, exciting, and fully immersive 15-minute experience that does not hold back when it comes to theming and excitement. The attraction, with its multiple ride systems and show scenes, is difficult to categorize, but one thing is certain: **Walt Disney Imagineering** (WDI) has delivered exactly what some *Star Wars* fans and park guests were saying was missing from the new *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* lands.

When Disneyland and Disney's Hollywood Studios debuted their near-identical versions of the land in May and August, respectively, some

Star Wars fans and park guests were left wanting more. This is not to say that the land and its opening-day attraction, *Millennium Falcon: Smuggler's Run* were not hits. The lands and attractions at both parks have been widely lauded for their innovative, imaginative, and immersive design. In fact, the first of the two identical *Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run* simulators at Disneyland was awarded a Golden Ticket Award by *Amusement Today* for Best New Family Attraction of 2019 and was named one of *Time* magazine's World's Greatest Attractions.

Still, for some, there was a sense that something was missing. Some said that void was an anchor attraction — a ride of grand scale that pulled everything else in the land together. Conversely, this response perplexed many who immediately fell in love with the land, as is. Those

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NEWSPAPER

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AT NOTEBOOK: John W.C. Robinson, jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

We're in this together



Robinson

It's become almost a cliché within the amusement industry to say that "...safety is everyone's business," but it's also a true statement.

When I first started visiting parks with my kids, they'd always remark on how I'd halt for a moment to help direct a car that was having issues getting out of its parking spot or when I'd stop to pick up trash along the midway and dispense of it properly.

I'd explain, "It takes seconds out of our day to step forward, just do the right thing. Every employee here is somehow working to make sure we have a good day. The least I can do is take care of something small that may improve someone else's day."

In one of my first years working in the industry, I was doing marketing work for a small amusement park. Late that summer, they opened their first wooden coaster and I found myself (with permission) in an area that's normally off limits while the ride was in operation. I was taking photos of the ride in action for the following year's print materials. When I zoomed in on a shot, something fluttering caught my eye. I started searching around with my camera lens to see if I could pick up what was moving into the frame, figuring it was maybe a bird nest or similar. One of the wooden rails along the side of the coaster had come loose and was only secured on one end. When the coaster would roar by at 50 mph, the shaking would bounce the piece of wood around. I turned and informed the park escort who was with me. Quickly, the ride was shut down, maintenance was out and the wooden railing repaired. The whole process took about 15 minutes, but I shudder to think of what could've happened had I not acted and said something.

Acting and reacting are some of the keys to safety within facilities. Education is another big key. While visiting Dollywood for a media event, a small group of us had gathered for a press conference near Thunderhead and we suddenly heard a loud thud. We turned to see an older man, a photographer for the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, had collapsed onto the concrete. Initially thinking he'd collapsed from the heat, we quickly discovered he'd suffered a cardiac arrest. Dollywood staff who just happened to be nearby — ride operators, custodians and guest relations — quickly took charge and began performing CPR. When Dollywood's First Aid response team arrived, they were able to resuscitate him and have him air-lifted to a nearby hospital, where he made a full recovery. The photographer later told the *Knoxville News Sentinel*: "Doctors [told] me that if I had not been [at Dollywood], they told my wife I would have passed. There were people who were there who knew exactly what to do and did it instantly and didn't hesitate."

Safety is everyone's job. There isn't an exception to that. From the owner/operator to manufacturers to part-time employees on the custodial staff to the guests themselves, the more we know and the more we all work together, the safer everyone is — and the more enjoyable a day can be had in amusement facilities around the world.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.



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Address: P.O. Box 5427, Arlington, Texas 76005-5427, USA

Deliveries: 2012 E. Randol Mill Road #203, Arlington, Texas 76011, USA

Phone: (817) 460-7220

Fax: (817) 265-NEWS (6397)

Websites: www.AmusementToday.com, www.GoldenTicketAwards.com

Call **(817) 460-7220**

Founder & Publisher

Gary Slade • (817) 460-7220 x3
gslade@amusementtoday.com

Accounting & Classified

Sammy Piccola • (817) 460-7220 x1
spiccola@amusementtoday.com

Assistant Office Manager, Circulation

Savannah Breen • (817) 460-7220 x5
sbreen@amusementtoday.com

Advertising

Sue Nichols • (615) 477-5432
snichols@amusementtoday.com

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



GUEST OPINION: Randy Davis, Senior VP, IAAPA Safety and Advocacy Services

Safety makes the amusement world go 'round

Providing a safe experience for guests and employees, and continually raising the bar for safety, is the highest priority of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) and its members.

IAAPA holds safety institutes, forums and roundtables at its expos and at events throughout the year. These programs range from training for establishing a culture of safety and understanding of basic safety principles to advanced discussions of relevant safety topics.

Fundamental to IAAPA's efforts on amusement ride safety is a focus on safety standards. Since 2003, IAAPA has been dedicated to harmonizing the major sets of safety standards, holding meetings at its expos directed toward this goal. The focus has been on the standards of technical committees on amusement rides and devices of ASTM International, the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). While not always identical, these sets of standards have been largely harmonized worldwide.

A major accomplishment has been agreeing



Davis

on ASTM F2137 as the one global standard for measuring dynamic characteristics, or G-forces, on rides. Its language appears in all three major sets of standards.

IAAPA is also dedicated to ensuring ride safety is effectively regulated at the appropriate government level. The goal is for governments to adopt one of the existing harmonized sets of standards rather than develop a new set. Technical experts have dedicated hundreds of hours to developing these standards, making them the best basis for regulation.

In Europe, a revised version of EN 13814 was published last May. European countries must adopt this standard within a three-year grace period. In the U.S., IAAPA is assisting the few states that do not currently regulate ride safety in establishing an effective law and urges that these states incorporate the core ASTM standards. Elsewhere in the world, IAAPA works with the authority having jurisdiction and urges adoption of one of the three major sets of standards.

Through international cooperation, our industry will continue to be one of the safest forms of recreation available.

**Editorial**

Dean Lamanna • (817) 460-7220
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

Tim Baldwin • (972) 697-9745
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Jeffrey Seifert • (817) 460-7220 x4
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

B. Derek Shaw • (717) 843-3050
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

Pam Sherborne • (615) 308-3310
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Editor & Production Manager

John Robinson • (513) 256-1441
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

Monthly Contributors

David Fake, Bubba Flint, Lottie Minick, Richard Munch, Janice Witherow

Association Memberships

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2 MINUTE DRILL

Seth Alberts, Ralph S. Alberts Company

As a third-generation owner of **Ralph S. Alberts Company, Inc.**, **Seth Alberts** grew up around the industry and recently succeeded his father, **Ed**, who now sits on the board of directors of this custom molded foam and plastics firm specializing in the amusement and medical simulation businesses. Seth is a member of various boards and advisory panels and belongs to several professional and leadership organizations. His emphasis on developing a strong team, pleasant approach and focus on high-value and high-performance while still maintaining a family work philosophy are what makes him a success — and popular with his clients.

Title: President and CEO

Number of years in the industry:

Officially 15 (but, in reality, since birth).

Best thing about the industry:

The people you get to interact with, the loyalty, and the ability to create thrills.

Favorite amusement ride:

Fury 325 at Carowinds.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...

A hunting and fishing guide.

Biggest challenge facing our industry:

In general, for most people I would think the ever-increasing ticket prices for park entries.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ...

Seeing the joy it brings to patrons.

It's January! My favorite wintertime drink is ... My dad's famous homemade eggnog.

Most bizarre/favorite fashion statement at the moment: I'm back to rocking Air Jordan retro sneakers.

My biggest fear is ... I think Will Smith said it best, and it's what I honestly believe: "Fear is not real. ... It is a product of our imagination, causing us to fear things that do not at present and may not ever exist. That is near insanity. Do not misunderstand me, danger is very real, but fear is a choice."

The three words that best describe my backyard are ...

Mountain, stream, relaxation.

When I say college sports, you say ...

Penn State Football and Kentucky Basketball.

When ordering dessert, I typically get ...

Espresso and cheesecake.

The one book I would recommend everyone to read is ...

Make Your Bed by William H. McRaven.



AT: Janice Witherow



Seth Alberts is a third-generation owner of Ralph S. Alberts. The company specializes in molded foam and plastics for the amusement industry.

COURTESY RALPH ALBERTS COMPANY, INC.

My life motto is ...

"Who dares wins," and: "Adapt or die."

I usually call it a night at ...

Usually by pulling an Irish goodbye.

The song that always makes me want to dance is ... My dance moves are terrible, but probably "Saturday Nights (Remix)" by Khalid and Kane Brown because my kids play it on repeat.

My next vacation will be ...

More than likely to our property on Hilton Head Island.

My friends all call me ... Albert.

At lunch time, you can usually find me ...

At the gym.

The household chore I least enjoy is ... Laundry.

In this New Year, I am really looking forward to ... Like every New Year, my favorite meal: pork, sauerkraut and mashed potatoes.

Favorite professional athlete:

Chipper Jones.

The coolest Wonder of the World is ...

The Roman Colosseum — I can only imagine either attending or participating in a gladiatorial contest.

I wish I had more time to ... Like the other career I would like to pursue, hunt and fish.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Seeing double



ORLANDO — During IAAPA Expo 2019, Dick Knoebel of Knoebel's Amusement Resort was beside himself. His family partnered with Sally Corporation to create a bust in the likeness of the 80-year-old park owner and IAAPA Hall of Fame member as a surprise. Sally's John Wood (bottom left) was excited to show off the sculpted likeness, designed from photos provided by the Knoebel family. COURTESY SALLY CORP.



Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

Bullfroggin' at AstroWorld

Chuck Hendrix, founder and CEO of Rosharon, Texas-based Innovative Leisure Partners, is a larger-than-life theme park veteran. He began his career as a teenager at **Six Flags Over Georgia**, where he was a host at Casa Magnetica — a tilted fun house with gravity-defying gags. He later moved into park management at the company.

In 1997, while president of **AstroWorld** in Houston, Hendrix frequently walked the tracks of XLR-8, an **Arrow Dynamics** steel suspended coaster that encircled the old Lost World Adventure river cruise ride. The latter attraction, then defunct, was overgrown and populated with local wildlife.

While walking the coaster one morning, Hendrix looked below to see huge bullfrogs in the river. On his next track walk, he brought a string knotted with dried flies, which he dangled to the water. The bullfrogs were lured to it immediately.

Hendrix is a southerner who loves eating frog legs. So, one night after the park closed, he gathered several friends armed with adult beverages, a deep fryer... and .22 rifles. And they killed, cooked and consumed 48 bullfrogs. It was a celebration of friendship and fresh, delicious frog legs in the otherwise deserted park.

AstroWorld's public relations manager got wind of the adventure the next day and confronted Hendrix. Halfway through his explanation, she blurted, "Chuck, you're a maniac," and left the room exasperated.

In a guilt-dispersing leap, Hendrix assumed she was miffed for missing out on the amphibious feast.

Lottie Minick is a 45-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email lottie@minickassociates.com.

►IAFE

Continued from page 1

We've had a lot of compliments on the program content, the quality in the trade show and they loved the facility. And of course we've had good weather!"

Cindy Henning, executive director of SLA was also pleased. "We had a really good crowd and a really good show this year. The **Grand Hyatt** has been great for us, being next to the convention center." **Mary Chris Smith** was elected as the new president of the association. "I follow in the footsteps of my grandfather **H.W. 'Hub' Luehrs**, **Luehr's Ideal Rides** [1990]; my aunt **Jean Ann Clair**, **Luehrs Ideal Rides** [2009]; and past president Uncle **Andy Schoendienst** [2019]. It's a big honor for me and I'm really happy to serve. I'm the third woman president in the [SLA] history," said Smith.

There were six amusement companies with booths at the IAFE trade show. They included **Deggeller Attractions**, **Kissel Entertainment**, **Powers Great American Midways**, **Reithoffer Shows**, **Strates Shows** and **Talley Amusements**.

Following is a sampling of some of the vendors, their wares and their thoughts about the trade show floor.

Indiana Ticket Company makes all types of printed ticket items, including hangtags, auction tickets, single and double roll tickets, redemption coupons and vinyl wristbands. The company was represented by the affable **Bill Owen**. "I see a lot of customers here. It's a good time for everybody to get together and see everybody that you haven't seen all year." New for the company is a digital dry ink process the company recently introduced that aids in the prevention of counterfeiting.

"It's been awesome. We enjoy this every year [and] look forward to it," said **Mike Kephart**, president of **Trams R**

Us. The tram rental service company's customers include the **Nebraska State Fair**, **Kansas State Fair**, **Florida State Fair**, **Florida RV SuperShow** and **Mecum Car Auctions**. "We come in. We provide the drivers, the fuel, we provide everything. They just tell us where they want them. One stop shopping," said Kephart.

Populous is a global design firm that specializes in event venues. "We have a real strong portfolio of work with fairgrounds that ranges from master planning work to new facility design. We look holistically at the site and how all those buildings work together for large events or individual events," explained **Charlie Kolarik**, associate principal. The company recently did work with the **Oklahoma State Fair** on a new 200,000-square-foot expo hall. Populous also helped them recraft their equestrian livestock event zone. Currently they are working on the design of a new multiuse event arena.

When asked about the show floor, Kolarik said, "This trade show is great. We've been coming to IAFE for a really long time. It's like a family reunion, almost. We see a lot of familiar faces, [and] meet the next generation of folks who are enhancing the venues of their facilities."

Circus Hollywood is a traditional family-themed circus that produces numerous shows including racing pigs, motorcycle thrill shows, petting zoos, animal encounters, pony and camel rides. The rental side includes bleacher, big tent, sound and light and stage rentals. "The past couple of years we have been doing most of the state fairs, like the **New York State Fair**, [and] the **Florida State Fair**. My father is also a Shriner where we do three ring circus displays," said **Crystal Coronas**. When asked about the trade show, Coronas said, "It's been pretty awesome. We like San Antonio, but we do miss

Las Vegas."

Vice President of Sales **Gary Todd** with **Deltronic Labs, Inc.**, a custom hardware/software company showcased a new product. "Our main focus is in the family fun business. We've done ticket eaters and we've done ticket dispensers. We have come up with an automated ticket dispenser, so people don't have to go up to the ticket window and give their cash or credit card to a person to get their tickets. They can simply come to the kiosk and punch in what they want, swipe their card and out comes their tickets," said Todd. This product came after extensive research at various venues. Todd found that 92% of the people he researched would rather go up to a kiosk than see a person.

Weather insurance for outdoor events is important. **Stacy Busta**, **Vortex Weather Insurance**, explained what the company offers. "We protect against rain, snow, heat, a combination of elements. We do it in a variety of ways, hourly, daily — we're pretty customizable to protect fairs and festivals. The weather is changing and we should be an important part of their risk mitigation plan." Busta thought the show was "pretty good. We got lots of people. It's been a good experience."

Variety Attractions is a full-service talent consulting/concert producing entertainment agency. "We do everything from the grandstand shows to the grounds acts to virtual reality machines," said Todd Boltin, president. "I came across these guys [VR machines] last year at the Michigan Fair Convention [Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions]." Variety had two on display. One was centered on distracted driving while the other contained virtual amusement rides including a roller coaster, a Ferris wheel and Jurassic Kingdom. "It's something new and different that the kids are looking for today. I'm trying to stay ahead of the



You never know who might be on the trade show floor (from left): Robert Nash (Robert De Niro), Stu Gordon (Danny DeVito) and Jade Roberts (Sylvester Stallone). Roberts also performs as the living Zoltar the Fortune Teller in the Liberty Mutual TV commercial. Populous (center), a global design firm that specializes in event venues, had representation at the IAFE trade show: Todd Gralla, principal and Charlie Kolarik, associate principal. New to the Variety Attractions booth (right) this year were two virtual reality machines that were popular with the attendees. Shown at the booth (from left): Cameron Greene, North Carolina Mountain State Fair; Chris Hesse, Variety Attractions; Andy Guerrero, Variety Attractions; Matt Buchanan, North Carolina Mountain State Fair; Todd Boltin, president, Variety Attractions and Ken Woodward, Variety Attractions. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

Taking time out of their trade show schedule were two of the bigger celebrities at the event: **Chubby Checker** and **Leroy Van Dyke**. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



curve," said Boltin.

Recently, Variety signed a deal with **Major League Eating**, a company that organizes professional competitive eating events and TV specials, like the annual **Nathan's Famous Fourth of July International Hot Dog Eating Contest**. Variety will help facilitate different contests at numerous fairs based on the food that is special to that region, like cheese curds, tacos, burritos or something else. Regarding the show, "We've seen a lot of new traffic, this year — a lot of fairs that haven't been here. That's a plus," said Boltin.

Some of the 43 SLA tabletop vendors included **Allied Insurance**, **Chestnut Identity Apparel**, **Haas & Wilkerson**, **ITAL International**, **Bob's Space Racers**, **Zamperla**, **Gull Wing**, **Rides4U**, **OA Finance**, **Wisdom Rides**, **Eli Bridge Co.**, **AERIA**, **Battech Rides**, **Worldwide Safety Group**, **Firestone Financial**, **Kaliff Insurance**, and **Waterloo Tent & Tarp Co.** The **Northwest Showmen's Association** was there promoting its February ride safety seminar. **OABA** also had a presence.

IAFE recognized individuals and fairs for service and excellence. **Kent Hojem**, CFE and CEO of the **Washington State Fair** in Puyallup, received the Hall of Fame award. **Emily Grunewald** of the **Red River Valley Fair**, West Fargo, North Dakota, was named Rising Star, and **Criss Neiman**, with the **Wyoming Association of Fairs**, was selected as the State

& Provincial Associations' Executive of the Year. Heritage Award winners were **Brian Carlson**, **Itasca County Fair**, Grand Rapids, Minnesota; **David Simington**, **Clay County Fair**, Spencer, Iowa; **Susan Sullivan**, **Montgomery County Agricultural Fair**, Gaithersburg, Maryland; **C.W. Thomas**, **Iowa State Fair**, Des Moines; and **Charlotte Thompson**, **Washburn County Fair**, Spooner, Wisconsin.

Jeremy Parsons, **Clay County Fair**, was elected second vice chair. **Jessica Underberg**, **Erie County Fair**, Hamburg, N.Y., passed the chair's gavel to **Nancy Smith**, **South Carolina State Fair**, Columbia.

Upon conclusion of the trade show, 100 IAFE members enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of **SeaWorld San Antonio**. "The guest services people talked about behind-the-scenes in guest experience, because guest experience is the catch word of everything right now," said Calico. Concurrently, and new for this year, were two small group sessions in the convention facility focused on how the center manages security and operations logistics along with electrical, plumbing and other services. "We have a lot of resources right here in San Antonio that we've not done yet. We'll probably roll out each year more off-premises experiences," said Calico.

The 2020 convention takes place Nov. 29 – Dec. 2.

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Bob Chapek (middle), chairman of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, delivers the opening dedication for *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*, which featured special performances incorporating an appearance overhead of X-Wing Fighter drones. AT/DAVID FAKE; COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD

►RESISTANCE

Continued from page 1

in the latter category contended that maybe the problem was that WDI did such an amazing job, fans were really just hungry for more. Regardless of the reason, *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance* certainly serves up the meat and potatoes and feeds a hunger many were craving, while delivering something extra for fans in both categories.

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance is difficult to classify as a ride or attraction because it is a sprawling adventure that incorporates multiple ride systems, show scenes and an intricate story line. Disney's Imagineers went back to their roots (think *Pirates of the Caribbean*) with a great story that unfolds throughout the experience, but they went one step further with *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*. With this attraction, Disney's unparalleled mastery of themed entertainment is exercised with such precision, guests are never quite sure where the preshow ends

and the ride begins.

(Note: spoilers ahead!) Disney Imagineer **Jon Georges**, executive producer for *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*, explained the ride to *AT* in this way: "You're engulfed in the attraction from the time you enter the briefing room, where BB-8 and Rey give you your mission. You then hop on a transport ship, piloted by audio-animatronics of Nien Nunb and Lieutenant Bek, a new character from the same alien race as *Return of the Jedi*'s Admiral Ackbar. You're then diverted to a [First Order] Star Destroyer in space. Now on board the Star Destroyer, you exit the transport ship and are directed by stormtroopers to an interrogation room, which is, in actuality, a cell. Here General Hux and Kylo Ren threaten you for information on the Resistance. Ultimately, Resistance agents break you out of the cell and you board a trackless vehicle and attempt to escape from the Star Destroyer and Kylo Ren."

There are actually four different ride mechanisms

throughout the experience: a transport ship simulator, a trackless ride vehicle, a drop elevator and a second simulator. These are so seamlessly incorporated into the attraction that most guests will not realize the transition into the final two mechanisms. Said Georges: "At one point, our trackless vehicle pulls into the escape pod, which is mounted on a simulator, think *Star Tours*, within a drop elevator, think *Tower of Terror*. So, you have this sort of triple-ride sandwich, that is, ultimately, the key to your escape and your return to the planet. I really mean it when we say it is the most ambitious and most technically complex attraction ever undertaken. We've literally combined multiple systems that all have to talk to one another and hand off to each other."

Georges explained that the whole idea for the attraction came out of a "blue sky" (concept phase) meeting more than four years ago. It gelled very early into the ride as it exists today without much change. "Throughout the design process, WDI had a direct relationship with the **Lucasfilm** team. So, the filmmakers that are making the *Star Wars* movies every day were embedded in the Imagineering team. **Deb Chang**, who is the VP of design for the *Star Wars* brand at Lucasfilm, was on our team and helping us with every storyboard sketch. Everything we did in close collaboration with the Lucasfilm team to make sure we are portraying the characters authentically, and that [the attraction] is really part of the *Star Wars* canon in a very authentic way. In the *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* land, we crafted not only a new planet, Batuu, but also a brand-new place [Black Spire Outpost], and we wanted to be certain they meshed seamlessly with all aspects of the *Star Wars* franchise," said Georges.

During a special dedication ceremony on the eve of the official opening of *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*, **Bob Chapek**,



chairman of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, lauded the attraction's immersive storytelling and echoed Georges' views of its technological innovations. Chapek said, "Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance sets a new standard for what a theme park experience can be. Tonight, we're welcoming the world to experience the *Star Wars* galaxy like never before, with the opening of the most ambitious, immersive, advanced, action-packed attraction we've ever created."

At the dedication of the attraction, several very special appearances and scripted performances were integrated into the event. These included a lengthy lightsaber battle

► See **RESISTANCE, page 7**



A platoon of First Order Stormtroopers (above) awaits guests as they arrive aboard the Star Destroyer. During guests' mission, an animatronic Lieutenant Bek (right) pilots their initial craft and guides them through their escape. AT/DAVID FAKE



The *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance* show building (above) is one of the largest ever created by Disney and is cleverly hidden within a Batuu mountainscape. During the experience, guests are captured and brought in for interrogation by First Order Stormtroopers (left). AT/DAVID FAKE

►RESISTANCE

Continued from page 6

between Rey and Kylo Ren, and an appearance of two van-sized X-Wing Fighter ships above the attraction. Boeing later confirmed that two of their Cargo Air Vehicle drones were utilized at the Dec. 4 dedication ceremony.

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance opened several hours earlier than scheduled on Dec. 5, with a special My Disney Experience App virtual queue. By incorporating this smart tactic that prevents what surely would have been an hours-long line, the park allows fans and guests to experience other attractions within the park while they wait, but most importantly frees the guests to spend money that they could not if they were confined to a line for hours on end. At press time, this virtual queue was still in place at the attraction, but there has been no formal statement by Disney on how long it will remain.

With Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance now open and the Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge land complete, even the harshest critic of the land's incomplete lineup of opening-day attractions should be satisfied. In fact, they will now have to admit that the land is now not only

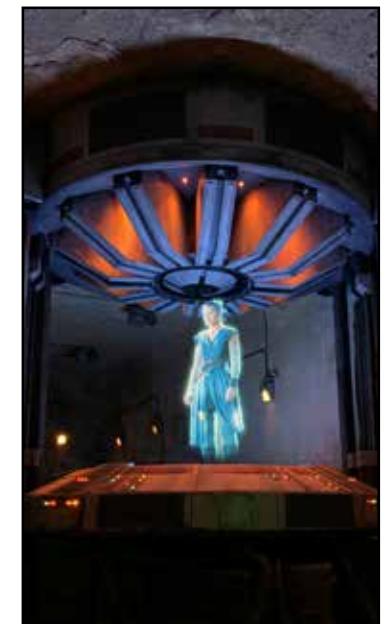


world-class and perfectly well-rounded with a complete offering of attractions and entertainment experiences, but also that Disney has far exceeded expectations in delivering the a E ticket-worthy attraction that is truly out of this world with Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance.

•disney.com

Settings familiar to Star Wars fans abound within Rise of the Resistance, including blaster-cut tunnels (right). A hologram of Star Wars heroine Rey greets guests and explains their mission ahead (top right). The experience climaxes with a thrilling surprise drop in an escape pod from the Star Destroyer.

AT/DAVID FAKE



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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Santa's Village to resurrect log flume —page 15 / Carnival Magic coming to Phuket, Thailand — page 16

Vintage Las Vegas glow to grow with Neon Museum expansion

Hit attraction shows Tim Burton art, sees one millionth visitor

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

LAS VEGAS — Already resurgent thanks to the popular **Fremont Street Experience** casino / retailainment corridor, **The Mob Museum**, and a boom in new and refurbished hotels, downtown Las Vegas will recapture more of its vintage glory with a major new project by **The Neon Museum**.

The existing 2.27-acre campus of the 1996-founded non-profit organization, which is dedicated to collecting, preserving, studying and exhibiting the city's glitzy old signage, is extending its reach across adjacent Las Vegas Boulevard North with a 32,000-square-foot expansion.

Last spring, the museum entered into a long-term, \$1-a-year lease with the city for the vacant **Reed Whipple Cultural Center**, a former church and arts space with distinctive midcentury architecture. The first phase of the \$3.1 million renovation project, targeted for completion in the first quarter of 2020, will double the size of the museum and provide for an indoor gallery and additional storage for its burgeoning collection of 2,000-plus artifacts, new administrative offices, and space



for conducting cultural seminars and educational outreach. General contracting and design are being handled by **SR Construction** and **Knit** (formerly **SH Architecture**), both of Las Vegas.

The building will be named **Ne10** — representing neon's chemical symbol and atomic number. It joins the museum's outdoor exhibition space known as the **Neon Boneyard**; the **North Gallery**, home of the acclaimed, 2018-launched after-dark audio-visual spectacle "Brilliant!" (*Amusement Today*, March 2019); the **Boulevard Gallery** outdoor exhibit and event space; and a visitor center housed inside the 1961 Googie-style **La Concha**



Whimsically invading **The Neon Museum** through Feb. 15, Tim Burton's "Lost Vegas" exhibition features the visionary artist and film director's sculptural and digital works, which have been integrated into the site's vintage sign displays. Burton (shown onsite at left) even contributes a few of his own neon designs. COURTESY THE NEON MUSEUM

Motel lobby structure, which was moved to the site from its original location on the Strip in 2006.

"The Neon Museum has been a wonderfully successful addition to downtown, the city's cultural center," said Las Vegas Mayor **Carolyn G. Goodman**. "This expansion will allow the museum to continue its important work of preserving the city's history through our iconic neon signs."

"We are grateful to the City of Las Vegas, which continues to be a strategic partner in the museum's continued development," said **Rob McCoy**, museum president and CEO. "In addition to a long-term lease, the city is also providing a generous \$2.2 million

grant to help support ongoing operational costs, enabling us to offer more exhibition and education opportunities for the public."

A second component of the expansion project will see the **Neon Boneyard** expanded upward with the installation of two 30-foot-high, steel-beam grid walls on its northern and eastern sides. With space at a premium in and around the Boneyard, these structures will allow the museum to display more signs aloft. Electrified artifacts slated for exhibition on the grid include classic signs from the **Las Vegas Club**, **Barbary Coast** and **Binion's**.



A red-carpet exhibit

While growing its retro glow, The Neon Museum has stepped up its schedule of special events. Its most notable recent presentation, "Lost Vegas: Tim Burton @ The Neon Museum" — an exhibition of artwork by the visionary American film director, producer, artist, writer and animator — debuted in mid-October and is running through Feb. 15.

Mounted with a \$250,000 gift from the Las Vegas-based **Engelstad Foundation**, the large-scale display comprises sculptural and digital installations celebrating, in part, Burton's personal link to the city's historical neon heritage. Many of his works are site-specific creations and are integrated into the museum's "Brilliant!" nighttime presentation and sign collection — the latter prominently featured in Burton's 1996 film *Mars Attacks!*

The movie, an irreverent homage to the sci-fi B-flicks of the 1950s-60s and the disaster films of the 1970s, unleashed gleefully destructive alien invaders upon gamblers, casino workers and, yes, singer **Tom Jones**. The presentation of Burton's art at The Neon Museum offers a unique,

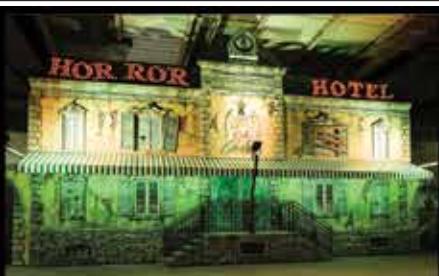
► See NEON, page 9



The facility's expansion into the former Reed Whipple Cultural Center across Las Vegas Boulevard North will provide 32,000 square feet for education and administration as well as artifact exhibition. The renovated building will be named **Ne10** — representing neon's chemical symbol and atomic number. COURTESY THE NEON MUSEUM



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►NEON

Continued from page 8

full-circle experience where the host institution also serves as creative inspiration.



"I've been coming to Vegas since I was born, basically — weekend visits as a child, which was very forbidden at that time... [as the city] was like an adult amusement park," said Burton, whose art has exhibited previously in New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Prague, Tokyo, Melbourne and Mexico City. "I used to sneak into the old [YESCO signmaking company] sign graveyard... back in the early '90s."

"The beauty of the signs and the artistry — that's something that always allured me. They were just like these old dinosaur bones or something, quite peaceful and beautiful and electric and alive, all at the same time."

Encompassing the site's Neon Boneyard, Boneyard Park and North Gallery, the exhibition incorporates projection mapping, animation and other immersive elements.

"We're one of the most unconventional museums in the world, and I daresay that Tim Burton is probably one of the most unconventional artists and directors in the world — it's a perfect match," said the museum's McCoy.

Expressing gratitude for the support of both Burton and the Engelstad Foundation, McCoy described the pop culture-flavored show as "the most significant art exhibit in the history of Las Vegas. It is the first time in almost a decade that Tim has exhibited in North America, and it's also the first time he has customized an entire exhibit to fit the vibe of the venue."

A flashy milestone

All of the recent excitement at The Neon Museum has not outshone a key measurement of its success since its opening as a public attraction in 2012. The museum welcomed its one-millionth visitor, **Nazarey David**, a Las Vegas resident, on Nov. 26.

David received a lifetime museum membership, a museum gift box, a dinner and overnight stay at **Wynn Las Vegas**, and a commemorative "1,000,000" neon sign reflecting the shape of the

attraction's iconic La Concha Motel lobby visitor center. The electrified gift was custom-created by **Hartlauer Signs** of Las Vegas.

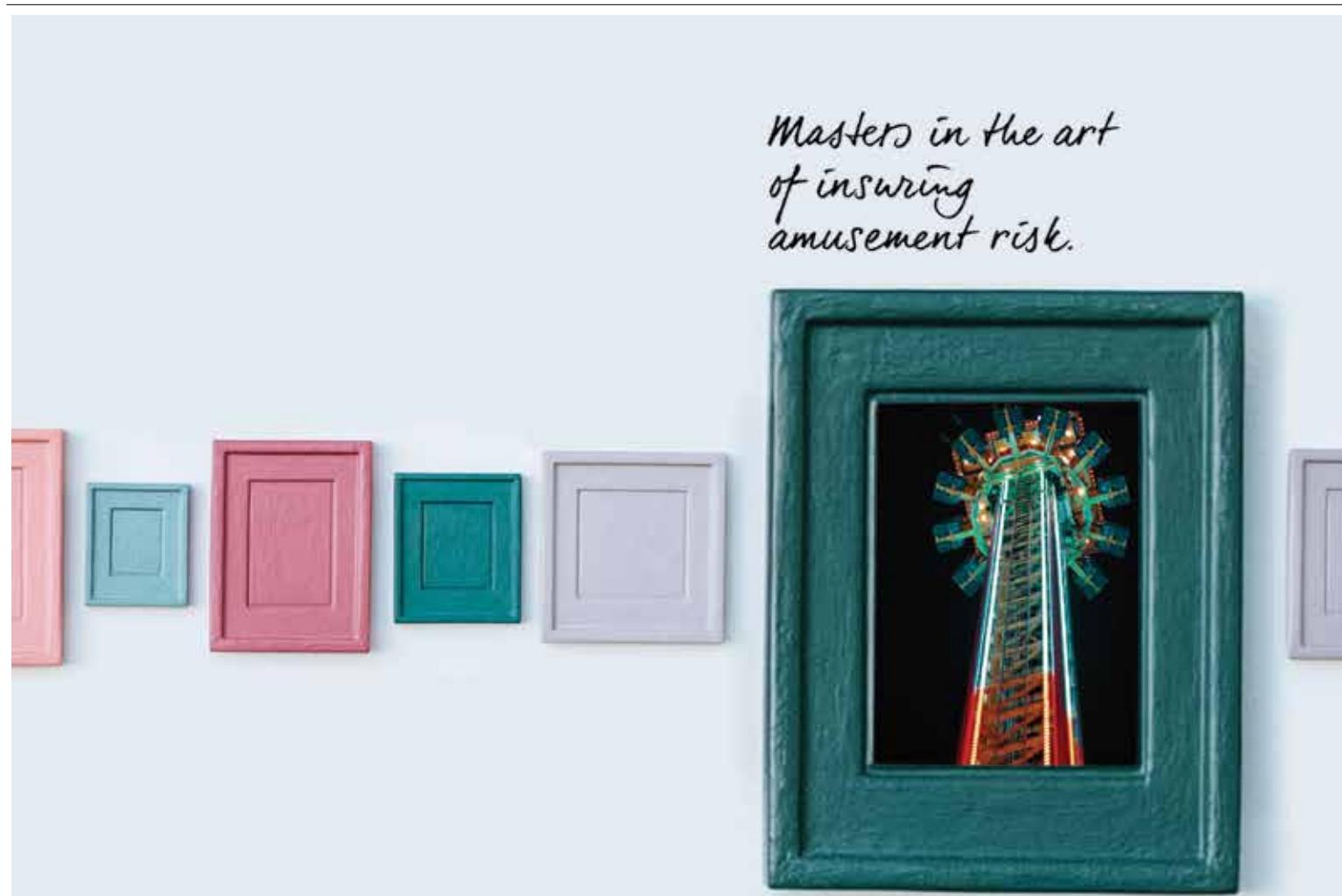
Last summer, the museum launched a new smartphone app for general admission visitors. The app provides access to information about 25 of the most popular vintage signs housed in the Neon Boneyard, including photos, text and audio narration. See the museum's website for app details as well as tickets for the Tim Burton and "Brilliant!" shows.

• neonmuseum.org



Rob McCoy, president and CEO of The Neon Museum, and Tim Burton greeted the media on Oct. 14 to introduce Burton's "Lost Vegas" art exhibition. Part of the facility's latest expansion project involves adding 30-foot-high, steel-beam grid walls to optimize space in the Neon Boneyard display area. COURTESY THE NEON MUSEUM

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AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Plans for a new addition to the **Dollywood** resort in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, were presented to the Pigeon Forge Planning Commission in November, according to a news report by an NBC affiliate in Knoxville, Tennessee.

The preliminary plans show a 310-room hotel, a 325-seat restaurant and conference space located near Dollywood's **Splash Country** and **DreamMore** attractions.

Ground was broken on a 23-hectare (57 acres) theme park in Pampanga, Philippines, on Nov. 25. The family-oriented park has been named **Pradera Islands Amusement Park**. Pampanga Provincial Board Member **Mylyn Pineda-Cayabyab** was just one of the family members on hand for the groundbreaking. She said that her family wanted to create a tourism spot that would cater to the whole family.

"There are activities for kids, for fathers and mothers," she was quoted as saying.

The theme park will be built alongside a speed track and a flying club.

Pradera Verde has been known for hosting the **Lubao International Hot Air Balloon and Music Festival** since 2015.

The park is also home to a golf course and a wakeboarding park. Villas for overnight stays also are also available inside the park.

Stargazing is typically an activity reserved for nighttime, but for the **Museum of Aviation** in Warner Robins, Georgia, exploring space is as simple as inflating its new mobile planetarium.

A little over two months ago, the museum's **National STEM Academy** acquired a new StarLab planetarium that can educate students right at their school.

The planetarium fully inflates in five minutes and can hold up to 30 students at a time.

Inside the planetarium, students can learn about lunar phases and our solar system.

The planetarium can visit any school within 50 miles of the Museum of Aviation. It also can be visited at the museum for \$3 a person.

The museum's TinkerTech program helps children learn more about space and technology through hands-on activities and camps.

Big Snow American Dream in East Rutherford, New Jersey, opened its doors for year-round indoor skiing and snowboarding on Dec. 5. It will operate daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The 180,000-square-foot park is totally climate-controlled and boasts a 16-story ski slope. There are four acres of snowy slopes. An ice rink also is available.

Guests are supplied with everything they need for whatever activity they choose. Items provided include all the clothing and gear needed to enjoy a day on the snowy slope.

There are several price options, including a basic pass giving guests two hours on the snow

and a three-day package that includes all rentals and an introduction lesson.

The park plans to offer camps and lessons.

North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department officials are analyzing ways to increase revenue at the **Funland Amusement Park** and the **Burns Park** concessions stands, which the agency's director said are projected to lose \$60,000 this year.

The city has explored various options in the past to deal with the negative balance from concessions, such as handing off control to parents or team leaders, but found that it's generally easier for the city to manage the stands. That has been done in the past but, apparently, it has not experienced smooth sailing.

Some of the city officials don't seem to be too worried about the park not making a profit.

"Not everything in our city has to make money," **Terry Hartwick**, the parks department director, stated during the latest discussions.

Cartoon Network, in collaboration with **Palace Entertainment**, will be opening a themed hotel in June 2020 on nine acres in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Plans indicate that the hotel will offer 165 rooms, each decked out with colorful cartoon characters such as Ben 10 and Adventure Time to the iconic hit series like *Powerpuff Girls* and *Johnny Bravo*. The rooms will be equipped with themed decor including wall art, bed-sheets and cushions.

The Cartoon Network hotel also will launch family lodging services with branded theming across guest rooms, resort amenities, dining locations and on-site activities.

The hotel has been designed to reflect the brand image of Cartoon Network and with the aim to bring to life its fan-favorite series in a three-dimensional manner.

The property is adjacent to the **Dutch Wonderland Family Amusement Park**. That park will offer special admission discounts to the guests of the hotel.

In addition to innovative rooms dedicated to classic cartoon shows, the hotel will also feature Land of P'ool, a concession stand at the outdoor pool, which will also have private cabanas; and Cartoon Kitchen, a full-service restaurant that will serve dishes inspired by the popular shows.

Small Worlds Tokyo, a very big indoor miniature theme park, will open in Tokyo's Ariake district near Tokyo Bay on April 25.

Small Worlds, Inc., operator of the theme park, hopes to offer world class entertainment by utilizing cutting-edge visual technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality.

The indoor facility has a total space of about 8,000 square-meters (about 86,111 square feet).

Seven miniature model areas will reproduce famous anime scenes and places from around the world.

Ryman Hospitality Properties executives have signed a deal to buy the downtown Austin entertainment complex home to **Austin City Limits** (ACL) for about \$275 million.

The pending deal, expected to close in the first quarter of 2020 is between Ryman and publicly traded **Stratus Properties** for Block 21.

The Block 21 complex comprises the 2,750-seat ACL Live at the Moody Theater, the 350-seat 3TEN at ACL club, the 251-room Residences of W Austin Hotel and about 53,000 square feet of commercial space.

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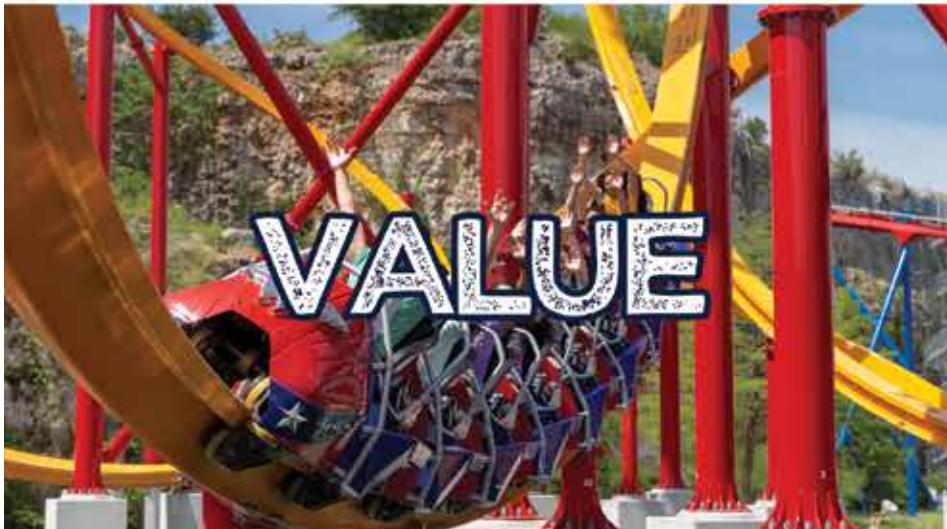
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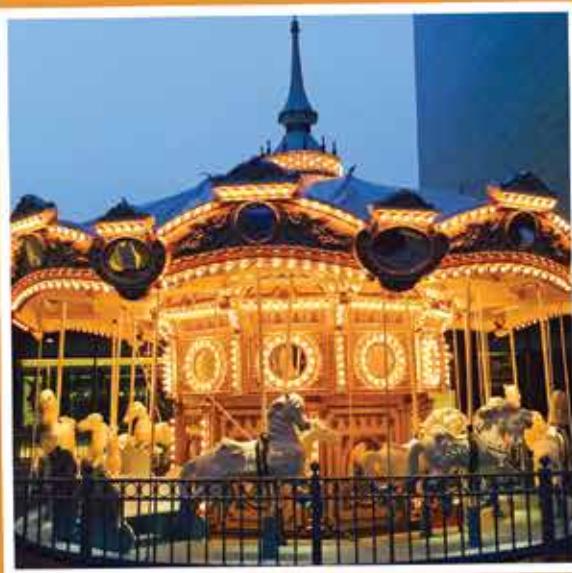


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Gould Manufacturing at center of reemergence of auto rides

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

STONY MOUNTAIN, Manitoba, Canada — **Gould Manufacturing**, a manufacturer of auto rides for amusement parks, was started by Peter Gould in 1965. The company featured the Antique Auto Ride. The ride utilized a center guide rail that still allows a bit of freedom to actually drive and maneuver the otherwise fully functioning, two-thirds size replicas of 1911 Ford Model Ts. The ride with its two or four-person options enjoyed immense popularity in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, but in the 2000s, several parks began removing their auto rides to make way for bigger, more thrilling, or more currently themed attractions. Soon after their removal, however, a very unexpected phenomenon occurred that has many of these parks bringing back the auto ride.

Peter Loewen, president-manager, at Gould told AT, “[The parks] soon realized they had patrons returning to the parks that now had families of their own and were looking to share nostalgic moments with their children that they had shared with their parents.” It was the Antique Auto Ride, in particular, that these



Peter Loewen and Joanne Loewen (above left) exhibited the new Gould Manufacturing Grand Prix car (right) at IAAPA Expo 2019. The new sports car model (debuting in 2020 On Hersheypark's Highway 66) joins the company's Antique Auto and Safari Jeep models.

AT/DAVID FAKE; COURTESY GOULD MANUFACTURING

patrons were missing. Parks such as **Valleyfair** in Minnesota brought back its Antique Auto Ride in 2014, and **Kings Island** in Ohio did the same earlier this year. Loewen said, “When Kings Island opened the new Kings Mills Antique Autos with brand new vehicles from Gould, a new location was chosen because it was experiencing significantly less traffic. Now that same area is known as a bottleneck in the park thanks to the popularity of the ride.” Loewen added that **Santa’s Village** in Illinois even claims that the Antique Auto ride is the most popular attraction in the park.

Loewen hears very similar stories of nostalgic memories each year at the IAAPA Expo, with comments from attendees such as, “That is the first vehicle I ever drove,” or “I remember that was one of the first rides I rode at a park.”

Not long ago, **Hersheypark** in Hershey, Pennsylvania, approached Gould Manufacturing to replace its aging **Arrow** automobiles on the Highway 66 ride. The company obliged, which prompted the design of a new sports car model for the park. Gould’s new two-seat Grand Prix model was on display at the IAAPA Expo



and will debut next spring on Hersheypark’s Highway 66 Ride. A four-seat Grand Prix model is also in the works.

Since the opening of the company, very little has changed about the Antique Auto Ride, with the exception of the use of newer Honda motors and a slightly narrower body width, which allows for side-by-side shipping in an overseas shipping container. Gould now also offers a two-seat Safari Jeep and the previously mentioned Grand

Prix Auto version of the ride. All cars are fully functional, with gasoline or battery-powered motors, and can operate either on a predetermined track or individually as Parade Vehicles.

Loewen expects the rides resurgence of popularity to continue and said, “The auto ride is here to stay. This ride has become a mainstay for parks. Its nostalgia factor ranks right up there with the carousel and the Ferris wheel.”

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IRM, Santa's Village to bring new life to retired log flume

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

DUNDEE, Ill. — In front of a gathering of industry professionals and preservation-minded enthusiast organizations, **Sam Shurgott**, president of **International Rides Management (IRM)**, announced from the *Amusement Today* booth at IAAPA Expo 2019 that a classic log flume will be saved by being relocated to **Santa's Village** in Illinois.

The park just concluded its 60th anniversary season as the Christmas season came to a close. Following the last days of operation, preparations began for the process of bringing the flume to its new home.

The flume originally operated at **Kiddieland** in Melrose Park, Illinois, until the park's closure in 2009.

"My buddy Sam Shurgott at IRM rides is very big into historical parks and park equipment," said Santa's Village Park President **Jason Sierpien**. "He reached out to me at IAAPA [Expo] 2018 and let me know that the Kiddieland log flume had just become available. At the time we already had three Kiddieland originals, all of which I rode as a youngster. So, to receive the news, I was super excited for our park to acquire it."

Upon its debut, the relocated attraction will be named **Yuletide Plunge**. The flume was originally built in 1992. Supplied by **O.D. Hopkins**, Log Jammer was a beloved favorite at the park through its final days of operation.

Darrell Klompaker, general manager at **Little Amerika** in Madison, Wisconsin, acquired the flume following Kiddieland's closure. Although intend-



The relocated log flume originally operated at Kiddieland in Melrose Park, Illinois. AT/GARY SLADE

ing to put the ride in his park, Klompaker was in discussion with Shurgott and arranged to move on from the flume to consider other installations.

"He wanted to make sure the flume was sold as a unit to a good home and not be parted out," said Shurgott. "We agreed to the task as I feel log flumes are still relevant in today's attraction lineups. Working off a short list of parks looking for a mid-sized flume, I approached Santa's Village about the potential at the IAAPA Expo in 2018."

"We are a young family park catering to kids two to 12 years old," said Sierpien. "To have a log flume of this caliber fits so perfectly with our demographic."

Although Santa's Village is beginning the construction process, the ride will not open for 2020 and could potentially need until the 2022 season for the attraction to be complete. Shurgott praised Klompaker for carefully dismantling the ride in 2009 and marking all the components and equipment as they came to the ground.

"Yuletide Plunge requires a layout of about 75,000 square feet," Sierpien told *Amusement Today*. We are anticipating the

addition of more useable land in the near future which will allow the log ride to go into an expansion area of the property. Therefore, no rides will need to be relocated."

Park officials are pleased to duplicate the ride's original layout. If so, the attraction will retain a length of 1,100 feet. The lift hill on the dramatic plunge stands 40 feet tall. Expected capacity is 600 riders per hour.

"Santa's Village is a grow-



ing park in an extremely large market," said Shurgott. "Jason not only has the drive to grow his park, but he also recognizes the historical significance of Kiddieland. This is a win-win for all Kiddieland fans and the enthusiast of the Chicago area."

"As the owner of a 60-year-old park that I both played at and worked at all my youth, the nostalgia plays in HUGE for myself and our guests and fans," said Sierpien. "We regularly see third

and fourth generation [families] attending the park. We know it's just as important to preserve those memories for our guests, as it is for us here at Santa's Village too."

This is the second log flume preserved and relocated from IRM. In 2000, **Arnolds Park** was the recipient of a 1970 Arrow flume from **Hunt's Pier** in Wildwood, New Jersey. It now operates as Boji Falls Log Flume in Iowa and will celebrate a 50th birthday in June.



Sam Shurgott of IRM (left) and Jason Sierpien of Santa's Village announce Yuletide Plunge at the IAAPA Expo 2019. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON






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Thai fun fair-themed park, Carnival Magic, in works in Phuket

AT: Dean Lamanna

dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

PHUKET, Thailand — **Carnival Magic**, described as the world's first Thai carnival theme park, is wrapping up more than four years of construction and is expected to debut in the first half of 2020.

The 40-plus-acre, five billion-baht (US \$160 million) project by **Carnival Magic Co., Ltd.**, an affiliate of **Phuket FantaSea Co., Ltd.**, owner of the adjacent **Phuket FantaSea** cultural attraction and amusement center and the country's largest theme park operator, is located in Kamala Beach on the island province of Phuket. It is positioning to become a major international tourist destination in Asia, with an expected attendance of more than one million visitors annually.

Kittikorn Kewkacha, CEO

of Phuket FantaSea, told Thai regional media outlet *Khasod English* that the new park will reflect Thailand's colorful tradition of parades, carnivals and temple fairs — presenting the pageantry and fun through modern technology and special effects. "While Phuket FantaSea emphasizes Thai culture, [Carnival Magic] is more appealing to kids and families," he said.

The major highlights:

- **Carnival Fun Fair** — This street fair will offer shopping arcades, boutique eateries and bars, dancing parade performers, games and kiddie rides.

- **Kingdom of Lights** — A world of sparkling gardens and landscapes, this area will be decorated with over 40 million light. It includes "River of Lights," a water parade accented by luminaries laced with millions of lights, that take-



Carnival Magic, a new, 40-acre sister attraction to Thailand's 20-year-old Phuket FantaSea cultural theme park, is designed to appeal more to families and kids and is expected to open in the first half of 2020. COURTESY CARNIVAL MAGIC CO., LTD.

place against the backdrop of a lake-spanning bridge that also serves as a prime viewing spot.

- **River Palace Theater** — This 2,000-seat facility, one of the largest theaters in the world, will boast a performance

stage 70 meters long and 22 meters wide. It will house a production featuring aerial ballet, animatronics and gigantic creatures presented by a cast and crew of more than 300.

- **Bird of Paradise**

Restaurant — A sprawling buffet-style restaurant that can accommodate over 3,000 guests, it will be accessed through the enchanted Garden of Paradise.

- **River of Bliss Restaurant**

— This will be a more opulent themed dining experience inspired by *Loy Krathong*, an annual Siamese festival. The 400-seat space will be lavishly accented with giant krathongs (logs adorned with lotus flowers) reflecting the best of traditional Thai craftsmanship, as well as a waterfall known as Happiness Falls. Diners will be transported to the restaurant via a "mystical barge" rising approximately seven meters.

Carnival Magic's 140-acre sister park, Phuket FantaSea, will celebrate its 20th year of operation in conjunction with the new park's opening.

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Warner Bros. Studio Tour London expands retail and dining options

LONDON — **Warner Bros. Studios London — The Making of Harry Potter** recently undertook a major expansion and revamping of its retail and dining offerings.

The popular movie-themed attraction, located in Leavesden, 20 miles northwest of London, has grown its commercial space from 6,000 to 9,000 square feet. It includes new retail experiences and three new eateries conceived by **Lumsden Design**, which specializes in experiential interiors and has worked collaboratively with the tour since its debut in 2012.

"For a project like this, it's important to understand that storytelling doesn't start or stop with the tour," said **James Dwyer**, Lumsden's design director. "It starts the moment the visitor arrives and permeates all spaces from café to retail and beyond."

The new dining options, which have joined the existing Backlot Café & Butterbeer Bar, are adorned with authentic props from the *Harry Potter* films and include:

- **The Chocolate Frog Café** — Serving a selection of sweets and treats, including hot chocolate, ice cream and milkshakes, this space is inspired by the ornate chocolate box packaging seen in the *Harry Potter* movies and features 70-foot-long



replicas of the series' magical Marauder's Map.

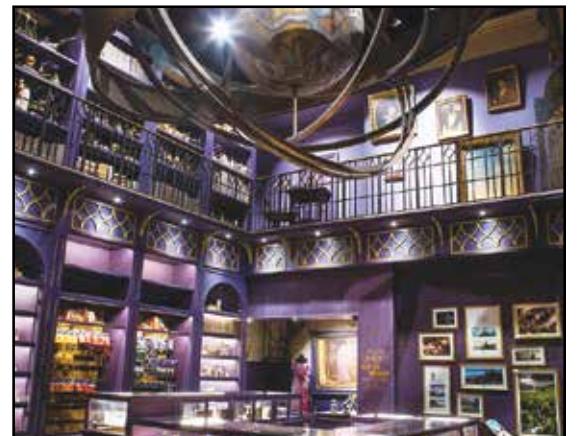
- **The Food Hall** — Capturing the celluloid atmosphere of the Great Hall at the wizarding school of Hogwarts, Lumsden worked with the films' original set builders to recreate the iconic hammerbeam ceiling with "floating candles" and a glowing night sky.

- **The Hub Café** — Under the watch of the Ukrainian Ironbelly dragon in the Studio Tour Hub, visitors can enjoy **Starbucks** coffee surrounded by hundreds of authentic prop potion jars seen in the movies.

The retail experience, meanwhile, has been reconfigured as a series of shops within shops inspired by the Diagon Alley set design, which allows for the rearrangement of products for visual storytelling.

Retail highlights include the Dark Arts area, with a vaulted ceiling and 16-foot-high stained-glass window (another actual movie prop), and the Wand Shop, inspired by the interior of Ollivanders. Included is a gallery and collectibles space celebrating the character Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts.

— Dean Lamanna



The Food Hall, inspired by the *Harry Potter* films' Great Hall at Hogwarts, and a high-end collectibles shop featuring a suspended orrery prop from the Hogwarts Astronomy Tower set are among the new offerings at Warner Bros. Studio Tour London — The Making of Harry Potter. COURTESY LUMSDEN DESIGN



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson
 jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

Surge Entertainment Center opened a 43,000-square-foot entertainment complex in Lafayette, Louisiana, just before Thanksgiving.

The entertainment center is a new concept within the **Surge Company**, which is co-owned by **Darren Balsam** and **New Orleans Saints** quarterback **Drew Brees**. It will feature a trampoline park, bowling lanes, a restaurant and batting cages.

"I think it's challenging at times to go out and eat and find a place that you know is going to cater to your kids, as well," said Brees. "We wanted to build something that was really fun for the entire family, has great food and has a great environment. It has something that everyone can do at the same time in one location."

Air carrier **Allegiant** has eliminated its plans to create a family entertainment center in the former **Marsh** supermarket building in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In 2018, Allegiant announced its foray into family entertainment with a venture called **Allegiant Nonstop** (previously known as **G4 Complete Entertainment**). It purchased the old Marsh property with plans for everything from go-karts, laser tag and virtual reality simulators to mini golf and bowling. The development was expected to create more than 100 jobs. While the Fort Wayne location was part of the original Allegiant Nonstop consideration, the property remains untouched.

"Allegiant's family entertainment center program remains in the pilot phase," offered **Andrew Porrello** with Allegiant's media relations. "The company decided to focus on other markets at this time."

Hampton, Pennsylvania's **Wildwood Sports & Entertainment Complex** has closed its doors after more than 30 years.

In a message on the complex's website and Facebook page, it was announced that the family entertainment center has closed.

"The staff did not have advance knowledge of the closing," stated **Ryan Mulligan**, the complex's general manager. "We met with all of the management staff early [that] morning to let them know about the decision. The rest of the part-time staff were called and emailed after the management meeting."

However, the complex's sports dome will remain open as **North Park Sports Complex** under new leadership. North Park Sports Complex will offer an indoor arena, an outdoor field, a creek and more.

Mooyah Burgers, Fries & Shakes partnered with **KidZania USA** to be one of the featured restaurant experiences in KidZania's first North America location. The innovative indoor family entertainment center, which now has 29 locations in 22 countries, opened its Frisco, Texas, location in late November.

"Mooyah is the perfect brand to join our first KidZania USA family in their backyard in Texas," says **Greg Stevens**, CEO of KidZania USA. "The company has established relationships in the Texas community, and we hope this partnership will be as beneficial for them as we know their brand will be enjoyed by the children in the area."

Virtual reality (VR) startup **Dreamscape** teamed up with **DreamWorks Animation** to launch a new *How to Train Your Dragon* experience at its flagship **Westfield Century City VR** center in Los Angeles in December.

The 11-minute experience allows up to eight participants to take part in a high-flying rescue mission. Like other Dreamscape titles, "DreamWorks Dragons Flight Academy" is a free-roam experience with full-body tracking and physical props for added immersion.



The Rides 4 U exhibit at IAAPA Expo 2019 showcased four SBF/Visa attractions within the footprint of the new Big Air Coaster. The coaster train is led by the new, eye-catching 'hamster wheel' spinning car. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Rides 4 U presents game-changing package of attractions for parks, FECs

SOMERVILLE, N.J. — During **IAAPA Expo 2019**, Rides 4 U unveiled a package of attractions perfectly suited for family entertainment centers and amusement parks looking to make an impact in a small space.

"For years, we'd discussed the possibility of locating multiple rides within one footprint. This year, we did it," stated **Len Soled** of Rides 4 U. "The result is a complete grouping of rides that will thrill and delight guests all inside of the footprint of our new Big Air Coaster."

The Big Air Coaster is the headliner of the package. The coaster's rectangular layout features turns and bunny hops that send **Visa**'s popular spinning coaster cars whirling. In addition, the coaster train can feature the new 360-degree spinning 'hamster wheel' car, which sends guests whirling in a whole new direction.

"The Big Air Coaster was a home run at IAAPA Expo 2019," said Soled. "Some coaster enthusiasts said the ride was one of the best coaster experiences they have had." The first Big Air coaster was sold to **Craig's Cruisers** in Silver Lake, Mich.

"Using both the 'hamster wheel' car and the spinning coaster cars on one train really

allows for The Big Air Coaster to offer two very unique, and very different rides along one track," explained Soled. "Thrill seekers will wait in line for the 'hamster wheel', while the spinning cars have a lower height requirement and are perfect for families who want to ride together."

The tracks of The Big Air Coaster encompassed three other attractions from **SBF/Visa**. The already popular Mini Dance Party 360 sent thrill-seeking guests spinning head-over-heels. The tower of the Drop N' Twist ride lured eyes to the conglomeration of rides while guests dropped, spun and bounced aboard. Finally, a Mini Break Dance had guests swirling with intense and fun g-forces.

All of the rides were augmented with spectacular LED lighting packages.

"These attractions are available individually, and we've sold most of them for years," explained Soled. "However, now, FECs and amusement parks can order the whole package or plan for it and have four breathtaking attractions all within a tight footprint. These rides deliver the thrills and fun, each one can be a boost for an FEC or park on their own. But together, they are an instant game-changer."

rides4u.com

Creative Works automates mini golf



ORLANDO — Creative Works announced a technology-driven social attraction for entertainment businesses called **Lucky Putt Golf**. The patent-pending **Lucky Putt** combines technology with mini golf. Players no longer use pencils and paper to keep track of scores. With **Lucky Putt**, all of that has been automated. The first installations of the attraction will be at **Andretti Indoor Karting & Games** locations in January. COURTESY CREATIVE WORKS

Nearly 400,000 have a 'Gumbo of Fun' at State Fair of Louisiana

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SHREVEPORT, La. – "The 2019 State Fair of Louisiana was a good run with the exception of rain on a few days. We closed due to weather on Friday, Oct. 25, and Wednesday, Oct. 30. It also rained on Thursday, Nov. 7, but the fair remained open," said **Chris Giordano**, president and general manager. "It has been estimated that the State Fair of Louisiana has an overall economic impact of \$24 million annually."

When the 113th edition closed Nov. 8, 371,300 fairgoers had visited during the 14-day long event, up 1% over the 2018 fair. The theme was "A Gumbo of Fun."

Crabtree Amusements, Inc., was again the carnival midway provider bringing in 60 rides, of which 20 were kiddie rides. To supplement the ride lineup, Crabtree had rides brought in by **Alamo Amusements**, **Paradise Amusements** and **Skerbeck Entertainment**. New to the fair this year was the ride **Speedway (Zamperla)**. The top three grossing rides were **Giant Wheel (Chance Rides)** provided by Crabtree; **360 (KMG)** provided by Skerbeck Entertainment and **Arctic Express (Chance Rides)** also provided by Crabtree. The carnival ride gross was up by 5% from the previous year.

A few of the fair highlights as Giordano explained, "Fiesta at the Fair on Sun, November 3 was a huge success for our Latino themed day. **Los Tigrillos** headlined the music lineup and drew a large crowd. Another highlight was Veterans & Military Appreciation Day on our final day Sunday, November 10. We had 43,200 people in attendance as we honored our military and Veterans. The State Fair offered free parking and gate admission to all military



The Crabtree Amusements midway had 60 rides, 20 of which were kiddie. They were supplemented with rides from Alamo Amusements, Paradise Amusements and Skerbeck Entertainment. 371,300 people visited during the 14-day fair.

COURTESY
STATE FAIR OF LOUISIANA

and their families. A Veterans Parade took place at 2 p.m. along the midway of the fair."

Special promotions included Free Fair Days, free parking and free gate admission on weekdays from 10a.m. to 3 p.m.; Discount Wednesdays, \$5 gate admission after 3 p.m. and \$20 carnival ride wristbands and \$2 Thursdays, where parking was \$2, gate admission was \$2 and carnival rides were \$2 each.

Giordano talked about the weather challenge experienced immediately prior to the start of the fair. "A severe



storm passed through the area several days before opening that destroyed a few large tents, utility poles and fencing. All damages were cleaned up and the fair opened as usual."

Food was again quite popular with beignets being the biggest hit at the fair. The New Orleans-style taste treat is similar to an English fritter. The French-named pastry is made from deep-fried choux pastry. Other food included jumbo corn dogs, Kool-Aid pickles, fried strawberries and alligator.

Some of the bigger entertainment acts included **Frank**

Foster, Baby Bash and Yung Joc, Southern Roots and Bigg Robb Show and Cupid. Free entertainment included **Circus Hollywood, The Double Hump Camel Show, Ms. Stevana's Friesian Horse Show, Kenya Safari Acrobats and the Paul Bunyan Lumberjack Show** - all this in addition to strolling entertainment.

"Our relationship with our carnival provider, Crabtree Amusements, couldn't be any better. Mr. **Pat Crabtree** runs a professional midway and he is a great partner of the State Fair of Louisiana," said



Giordano. Pat Crabtree also confirmed the positive experience with state fair personnel. "It is a pleasure to work with Chris and his team."

The State Fair of Louisiana mission is to promote the industrial and agricultural resources throughout the state and to provide a better quality of life for its citizens through education and entertainment. This show is the largest livestock show and carnival in the state. The fair has been a family friendly tradition since its debut in 1906.

The 2020 fair will take place Oct. 22 - Nov. 8.

[*statefairoflouisiana.com](http://statefairoflouisiana.com)

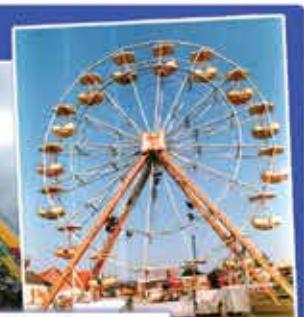


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Arizona State Fair attendance increased 14-percent during 2019

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

PHOENIX, Ariz. — During the 18 days of the 138th Arizona State Fair 1,262,868 people visited between Oct. 4 and 27. (The fair did not run on Mondays or Tuesdays.) The 2019 theme was "Pixel Yourself at the Arizona State Fair."

"Our success this year derives from a lengthy list of reasons and weather is on the top. We had 18 days of sunshine in the Valley of the Sun and we could not be more grateful," said **Brianda Martinez** with the Arizona State Fair. **Chris Lopez**, Vice President of **Ray Cammack Shows** (RCS Inc.) had a similar take on the conditions, "Weather was usual in Arizona that time of year, [with] warm days cool evenings, no rain where last year we lost a big Saturday to rain and flooding of [the] fairgrounds."

RCS provided a total of 69 rides, 55 games and 28 food stands. Three rides were new to the fair in 2019 including **Titan** (**Fabbri** Booster) that took riders 170 feet in the air. It was billed as the tallest portable ride in the U. S. Two other rides making their first appearance were Circus Train and Tea Cups, (**Jung Max**). The top five grossing rides included La Grande XL wheel (**Bussink**), Sky Ride (**Doppelmayr**), G Force, (**KMG**) Wild River flume (**Reverchon**) and **Titan** (**Fabbri**). RCS offered a limited number of P.O.P. Fun Passes on Thursdays (\$35) and Sundays (\$50) that sold out quickly. "The fair this year was awesome with



RCS provided a total of 69 rides, 55 games and 28 food stands. The Arizona State Fair is the final spot for RCS each season. They open again in March for the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo.
COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

all entities way up — rides approximately 18%, food 15% and games approximately 20%. It's a great way to end a season!" said Lopez.

"We are proud to call RCS our carnival provider the past 20 years," said Martinez.

Lopez is also pleased with the association. "The partnership is great. The fair executives and board, down to the newest team members are the best to work with. They have a very aggressive social media team that is bringing in the influencers. The Arizona State Fair is our home state fair and it's also where we end our



season so we are quite busy there entertaining family, friends, political and business associates that we have known for a long time. It is always nice to be home and provide that safe and quality fun at Arizona State Fair." RCS kicks off its 2020 season March 3-22 at the **Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo**.

Some of the special promotions to get people inside the gates included We Care Wednesday, Dairy Dollars Discount,

College Day, Service Saturday, Kids Day, Armed Forces Day, Friends 55+ Day, Phoenix Mercury Day and

Teacher Appreciation Day.

Admission prices were upped at the fair. "This year, we raised our admission prices \$2, from \$10 to \$12. Luckily, raising our admission price did not hinder our success," said Martinez. When asked about any fair firsts this season, "We are proud to have held Esports

[Gaming World competition] for the first time at the Arizona State Fair. Arizona Lottery sponsored the Esports cash match and gave \$20,000 in cash prizes."

Food is always an important component to any fair and the Arizona State Fair is no different. There was a variety from hot Cheeto stuffed pickles, hot Cheeto burritos, deep fried brownie Oreos, birthday cotton candy funnel cakes, charcoal ice cream cones, and 2 foot long corn dogs, to name just a few.

Entertainment in the **Veterans Memorial Coliseum** concert series included **Trace Adkins**, **The Cult**, **Pat Benatar** and **Neil Giraldo**, **Chase Rice**, **Stryper**, **Becky G**, **Billy Currington**, **MC Hammer**, and more. **Monster Trucks**, **an Indian Rodeo**, and the **Arizona State Dance Championships** rounded out the large-scale entertainment.

The 2019 fair really turned out very well as Martinez said. "We had a record breaking year! This year would not be the year it was if it wasn't for our dedicated staff, our talented performers, the hard-working vendors and all of our generous sponsors and, of course, our amazing guests."

As of press time, the 2020 dates had not been selected.

•azstatefair.com



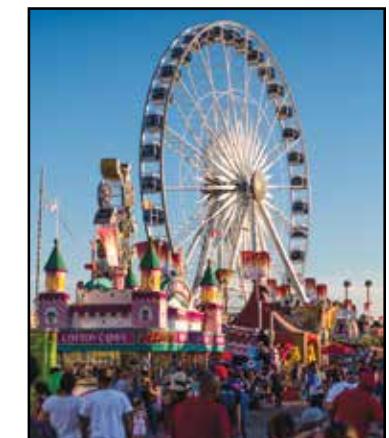
1,262,868 people visited the Arizona State Fair during the 18 days it ran. RCS has been providing the carnival midway for the Arizona State Fair the past 20 years.
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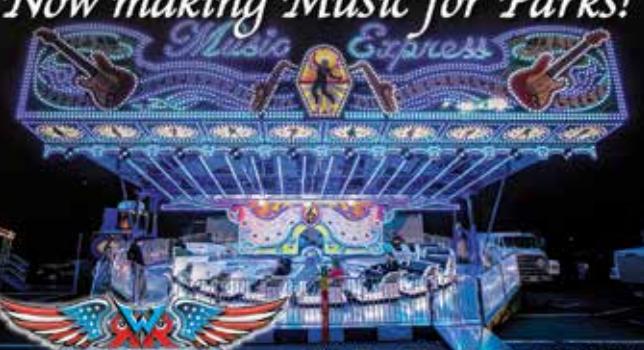
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MIDWAY SCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

The 2020 **York State Fair**, along with a name and date change also has a new midway provider, **James E. Strates Shows**. The fair (formerly known as the **York Fair**) reached an agreement with Strates Shows to provide the midway with its rides and attractions during the 10-day, July 24 - Aug. 4 run.

Strates Shows is America's last railroad carnival, down from over 100 before World War II. The show transports personnel and equipment on 61 rail cars and 34 tractor-trailers. More than 400 employees who operate games, rides and concessions and their families travel with the show.

Degsteller Attractions, which had the contract since 2010 was not able to accommodate the fair's date change. "When I was informed in May that the York State Fair's current midway provider would not be able to make the transition to our new July dates in 2020 and future years, my first call was to Strates Shows," said York State Fair CEO **Bryan Blair** in a media release. "Strates has a great history in York having played the fair from 1937 to 1947 and then holding the contract from 1950 until 1979," added Blair.

"The Strates Shows midway will feature over 90 rides, games and attractions, including large European rides that have not been seen at the York State Fair" said Blair. "Plus, they will be introducing our fair guests to their state-of-the-art FunCards electronic ticket system that allows barcoded tickets and armbands to be scanned at each ride," he added. Blair said that armband specials will continue to be offered every day of the 2020 York State Fair too.

"We are excited to have the opportunity to provide our midway at the York State Fair. Even though it has been 40 years since we last played the fair, we still receive messages from our fans here asking us to return. I am happy that we can finally fulfill these requests. The new dates fit perfectly into our annual route and we look forward to playing the fair for many years to come," exclaimed **E. James Strates** in a release.

The **Lake County**, Lakeport, California, **Fair** Board of Directors launched a search for a new CEO. **Courtney Conkle**, former CEO, left in September following the annual fair to accept the position of manager for the **Wyoming State Fair**. The Lake County Fair – also known as the 49th District Agricultural Association – is one of 54 fair organizations that operate as state agencies under the authority of the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Division of Fairs & Expositions. **Brass Ring Amusements** has the ride midway for the fair that will take place Sept. 3-6, 2020.

The 2020 **Crawford County Fair** in Bucyrus, Ohio, is going to be one day shorter this year. In the past, the fair ran Sunday through Saturday. Fair officials hope the change will attract more vendors as the fair now will only take up one weekend. The fair runs Monday, July 20, to Saturday, July 25.

D&R Shows, LLC, will provide the midway rides. In the past, the fair only had bounce houses.

The 2020 **Wright County Fair**, St. Michael, Minnesota, will be free for kids 17 and under. The move is aimed at getting more people through the gates in celebration of their 150th fair. (It should be noted there were no fairs in 1944 and 1945, as the grounds were used as a prisoner of war camp during World War II.) The fair runs July 22-26.

Changes are coming to the **Bartholomew County 4-H Fair**, Columbus, Indiana, but not until 2021. At that time the dates will shift to a late June start, in order to accommodate new midway vendor, **Kissel Entertainment**. The midway will open one day early, June 24 with the rest of the fair running June 25 through July 3, 2021.

Burton Brothers Amusements, who has provided the midway since 2009, will still be providing the rides for this year's July 10 - 18 fair.

The **Western Fairs Association Convention & Trade Show** gets underway later this month in Reno, Nevada. The Jan. 19-22 event at the **Grand Sierra Resort & Casino** connects more than 1,400 fair CEOs, directors, staff, and professionals. One of the highlights is the honoring of their two latest Hall of Fame inductees, **Barbara Quaid** and **Don Delahoyd** at an awards dinner. Quaid, CEO of Southern California's **Ventura County Fair**, and Delahoyd, owner, **Five Star Catering**, Watsonville, California, have both served on the Western Fairs Association Board of Directors and are past organization presidents. The award honors distinguished achievement or outstanding contribution by an individual in the fair industry.

John Morrison, former manager and CEO of the **Clark County Fair**, Ridgefield, Washington, recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the **Washington State Fairs Association**. He was involved with the fair for several decades as a volunteer, board member and leader. Under Morrison's leadership, the Clark County Fair broke attendance records. Twice it was named a Top Ten Fair in America. In 2011, Morrison was voted into a position on the state association board and was elected president, serving 2015-16.

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► Brazil's Acqualinda unveils plans, construction begins — page 25 / News Splash — page 26

Former Wet 'n' Wild Palm Springs to become desert 'surf club'

City greenlights plans for \$50M makeover of 21-acre water park

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — Southern California's most famous desert city is dozens of miles from the nearest surfable waves. But that will change when a new resort attraction begins churning up breakers in town and two similar proposed projects envision frothy sets on arid tracts nearby.

In late October, Palm Springs city planners greenlit The Palm Springs Surf Club, to be located on the former site of Wet 'n' Wild Palm Springs. Construction is already underway at the 21-acre site, which was purchased by Laguna Beach, California-based Pono Acquisition Partners I, LLC, from CNL Lifestyle Properties last January.

Originally opened as Oasis Waterpark in 1986, the park, located on South Gene Autry Trail, was acquired by Cedar Fair Entertainment Co. in 2001. Cedar Fair operated it as Knott's Soak City Palm Springs until 2013, when it was sold to CNL, rebranded as Wet 'n' Wild and placed under the management of Premier Parks, LLC.

The Palm Springs Surf Club's centerpiece will be a



The Palm Springs Surf Club is replacing Wet 'n' Wild's waterslide equipment with a more stylish, surfing-focused resort environment. It will include a reconfigured wave pool with new wave-generating technology, a new lazy river, new pools, a surf shop, and a bar and grill.

COURTESY THE PALM SPRINGS SURF CLUB

three-million-gallon wave pool outfitted with a newly invented system capable of generating waves of various sizes. The surf is suitable not only for recreation but for competition-level instruction and practice.

"You can learn to surf, you can train for the Olympics," said Eric Munoz, the project's chief development officer. "It's going to be a whole different experience."

A new lazy river, new pools, cabanas, and a bar and grill will round out the offerings.

The \$50 million park will utilize, reconfigure and retrofit the property's existing wave pool and infrastructure while remov-

ing the waterslide equipment and FlowRider surf machine. The entrance building will be expanded to include dining, a gym, a spa, a surfboard shop and media rooms. Although concept illustrations reveal sleek, streamlined design elements that convey a hipper, more sophisticated resort vibe, families will be welcome and a new play area for kids will be incorporated.

The park, which will provide at least 200 jobs, could open as early as the end of 2020. Breaking with previous operators, the new owner will not charge for parking.

Pono Acquisition Partners I

comprises several private investors, including pro surfers Kalani Robb and Cheyne Magnusson. Magnusson, formerly the director of BSR Surf Resort in Waco, Texas, has said the group "wants to make a Disneyland for surfers" in Palm Springs.

Other surf park projects in the Coachella Valley recently receiving initial approvals are DSRT Surf, featuring a five-acre lagoon (wave technology supplied by Wavegarden of Spain), a hotel and residential villas in Palm Desert; and Thermal Beach Club, encompassing a 22-acre lagoon and recreation area (wave system supplied by American

Wave Machines, Inc., of Solana Beach, California) surrounded by luxury homes in the unincorporated community of Thermal.

Opposition to the various surf park proposals in the region, where water resources are strained, has been countered by the fact that all will recycle water — though evaporation rates in an environment with extreme triple-digit summertime temperatures almost daily remain a concern.

The desert surfing trend has led local enthusiasts to form the Coachella Valley Surf Club, which provides regular updates on all three projects at its website. •coachellavalleysurfclub.org



Bloomington sets water park tax plan into motion



BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — Bloomington city leaders are nearing approval of an elaborate plan to build one of the nation's largest water parks beside the Mall of America. The deal hinges on the city's option to hike sales taxes at the Mall of America to pay debt on the \$260 million facility if visitors do not generate enough revenue. The city council voted unanimously in November to authorize imposing the taxes. Under the deal, a Louisiana-based nonprofit organization will borrow money from an Arizona public development authority to build the park.

COURTESY FORREC

Ohio's The Beach Waterpark for sale as doubt remains over park's 2020 status

MASON, Ohio — Anchor Associates' website has listed The Beach Waterpark in Mason, Ohio for sale.

The 34-acre water park, which opened in 1985, is located just north of Cincinnati, Ohio, near Kings Island.

The property listing comes seven years after the water park was saved and renovated by a new owner. The Beach Waterpark first closed after the 2011 season, and Adventure Holdings stepped up and invested \$6.5 million to revamp the facility. The park reopened in 2013, but now it could potentially change hands again.

The property's future has been in question for a while. At presstime, the company had not yet posted information about 2020 season passes or tickets on its website. Also, its winter attraction, Beach Mountain, was not in operation during the holiday season.

The Beach is home to 22 waterslides, live palm trees and a sand beach. The listing does not include a price, but Adventure Holdings purchased the property for \$3 million in 2012.



The news caught local hotel operators, businesses and the Warren County Visitors Bureau by surprise when it was discovered. However, the businesses feel most of the park's traffic was local and none of them expect a hit to their bottom line if the park closes.

Speculation is mounting that the value is in the land, not the park. The sale listing's emphasis on traffic and nearby residential communities implies that the land may be well-suited for commercial development. The Anchor Associates website does include information and diagrams for the waterpark in the property highlights.

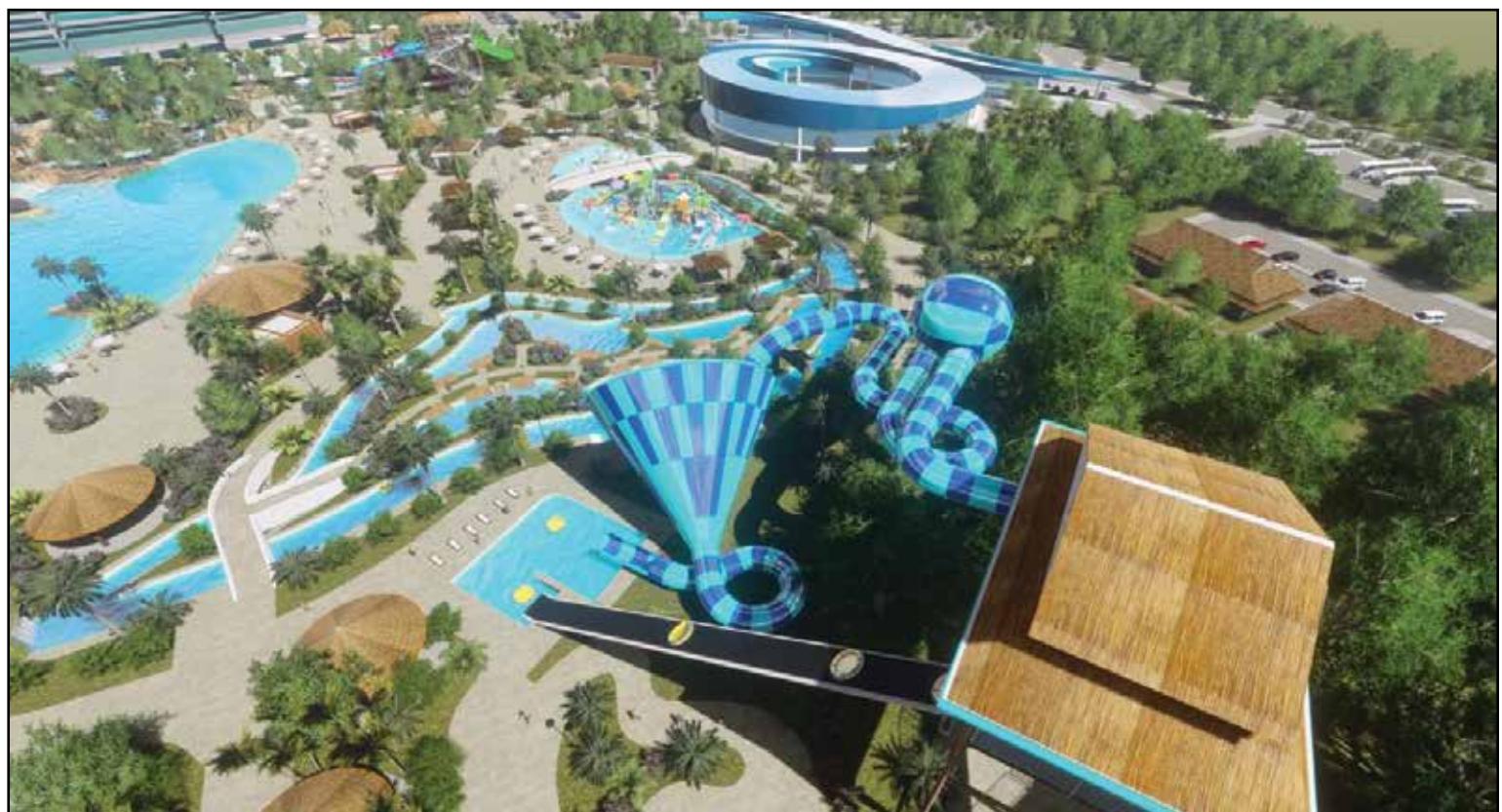
Volcanic island-themed water park under development in Brazil

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

ANDRADINA, São Paulo, Brazil — **Mário Celso Lopes**, a well-known entrepreneur and developer in the state of São Paulo, has unveiled plans and begun construction of **Acqualinda**, a world-class water park in the up-and-coming Brazilian city of Andradina.

Lopes, a native of the city, has contracted with Monterrey, Mexico-based **aQuakita** to supply more than 30 waterslides. Lopes traveled to Monterrey to see aQuakita's manufacturing facility, then visited water parks in Cancun to experience firsthand the company's water-slide products. According to Lopes, there was no Brazilian company that could supply a project of this magnitude. He had considered going to multiple suppliers but found that aQuakita had all of the product he needed as well as extensive experience in water park construction. The cost of the entire project has not been revealed, but the expenditure on the slides alone is approximately \$10 million.

Waterslides to be installed include several high-profile slides such as a Vortex, Kamikaze and Boomer — aQuakita's versions of the popular funnel/tornado slide, a body speed slide with drop capsule and a wall slide. Also included are what appear to be drop capsule slides with sidewinder loops, a bowl slide, pendulum slide and racing slides. The highlight attraction will likely be the record-breaking Aqua Coaster uphill water coaster, running 1,250 feet in length — claimed to be the lon-



These renderings show a bright blue funnel slide/sphere combination, colorful bowl slides and raft slides, with drop capsule slides coming out of a volcano. COURTESY ACQUALINDA



gest in the world. A separate children's play area will feature a splash pad and an interactive waterplay structure.

The water park will include a 3,000-foot-long lazy river with multiple paths and a wave pool at the foot of a massive volcano, from which will flow a scenic waterfall. Several of the slides will dart in and out of the volcano, and

a portion of the lazy river will also flow through the volcano. Lopes said the inspiration for the park came from **Universal Orlando Resort's Volcano Bay**. The initial phase is expected to be ready by the summer of 2020 and will accommodate 15,000 people a day. The second phase, planned to open a year later, will add a resort with hotel and entertainment.

The company's civil engineer and technical director, **Alexandre Gryzinski**, praised the size and scope of the Acqualinda project. "I've been working on water park construction for 15 years and this is one of the most beautiful projects I've ever seen," he said, adding: "Acqualinda is equivalent to the most modern parks in the world and has a very important differential that is to be themed. Social and environmental responsibility are other [considerations] of this venture." Gryzinski will be responsible for all technical aspects and will oversee the



installation of the equipment in the park.

SP-300 highway.

São Paulo, one of the 26 states of Brazil, is considered to be the most wealthy state and the most populous, with more than 45 million inhabitants. Tourism has become increasingly popular, with residents seeking vacation destinations away from the busy cities such as the capital city of São Paulo. The city of Andradina experiences a hot, muggy summer season and a fairly dry, but still warm, winter season — making it almost ideal for a water park resort.



Developer Mário Celso Lopes stands in front of a billboard designating the location of his Acqualinda water park and resort. COURTESY ACQUALINDA

2020 FlowRider Flow Tour coming to Epic Waters



COURTESY EPIC WATERS

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — Next year, **Epic Waters Indoor Waterpark** will host both the national and world flowboarding championships for 2020, set for Aug. 6-9 and Nov. 6-8, respectively.

The venue is the first in the history of the **FlowRider Flow Tour** (the competitions' sponsor) to be selected as the location of both events, which typically attract a combined 150-plus athletes from across the U.S. and around the world.

Open since January 2018, Epic Waters is the largest indoor waterpark under a single retractable roof in North America. Noteworthy features include year-round operations (courtesy of an enormous retractable roof), first-in-industry slides, an outdoor wave pool and the longest indoor lazy river in Texas. The park is also home to the largest FlowRider in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

[•epicwatersgp.com](http://epicwatersgp.com)

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NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

Royal Caribbean International (RCI) has started offering a new option for guests visiting its **Perfect Day at CoCoCay** water park. It seems that some cruisers just weren't satisfied that only those sailing on an RCI cruise ship can visit — or even get to — the water park. RCI operates several of the largest passenger ships at sea, and with the possibility of two of those megaships docking at the same time, some guests were looking for a more exclusive experience on the island in order to make their day even more perfect.

Visitors to the island are now able to purchase a Ride & Slide pass for an additional \$29 that will give them access to the water park for one hour before the park opens to the rest of the cruise ship passengers. The early ride pass is limited to the first 200 (per ship or per day was not clear) who are willing to shell out extra cash, and can be purchased onboard the ship. A precruise purchase option will become available in the coming months for those who like to plan ahead. In order to take advantage of the early ride time, guests must first invest in a full-day thrill water park pass, which varies from \$44 to \$99 per person, depending on the season.

Following a push from a local resident, **Lake Karāpiro** in New Zealand hosted an inflatable water park in December. **Waterworld**, an entertainment agency based in Tauranga, New Zealand, equipped the lake with a **Wibit** floating water park/obstacle course for four weeks. Resident **Sebastien Lemercier** noticed that there wasn't much to do on the lake unless one owned a boat or jet ski. He was aware of the success of Waterworld's previous inflatable installations in Auckland and Tauranga, and he convinced the company to set up an inflatable water park in his home city of Cambridge. He also discussed the trial with Deputy Mayor and Councillor **Liz Stolwyk**.

Waterworld moves its floating course from lake to lake, but following the trial at Lake Karāpiro a more permanent park could be arranged.

The **Movileanu** family of entrepreneurs, which controls the **Mera Hotels** on the Black Sea coast, will start construction next spring of one of the largest water parks in Romania at the **Neptun Seaside Resort**. The Movileanu family operates hotels with more 900 rooms along the coast.

Although mostly landlocked, Romania has nearly 140 miles of coast along the Black Sea between Bulgaria and Ukraine. Neptun, with its recent development, has become known as Romania's Riviera. The first phase of construction will include an aquapark and theme park. The second phase will include a 200-room hotel.

The city of El Paso, Texas, is set to open four water parks in 2020 and was offering season passes and flex-day tickets in December in order to attract holiday shoppers. The flex day tickets were only offered prior to the holiday and season passes were available at a

discount of \$130 for a family of five.

The construction of four water parks — each with a unique theme and set of attractions, was in response to the realization that residents were moving away in record numbers because of a lack of cultural and recreation activities in the city. In 2012, citizens approved a \$245 million quality of life bond to add to and improve the city's parks and recreation facilities, community centers, cultural centers, museums and libraries, as well as performance art and entertainment facilities.

An abandoned water park in Newberry Springs, California, may get a new lease on life. **Lake Dolores Waterpark** last operated in 2004. Since that time it has become an eyesore, attracting vandals, graffiti artists and even filmmakers looking for a suitable desolate location. However, the park's current owner, **G7GF Enterprises, LLC**, believes it can be restored to its former glory. The park dates back to the 1950s, when it was just a swimming lake with a campground. It was eventually transformed into a water park in the 1980s and became extremely popular into the 1990s. It operated sporadically, with reopenings in 1998 and 2002. Poor attendance and a lawsuit filed by an employee forced it to close in 2004.

The new owners have presented plans to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors that call for redevelopment of the 268-acre park in five phases over the next five years. Plans include rehabbing and reopening the 41-acre water park; restoring the 22-acre lake for boating, swimming and camping; and construction of administration space, commercial and retail outlets with the possible addition of hotels and restaurants.

In December, two new leisure centers opened in Belfast, Ireland. **Lisnasharragh**, built on the former site of the **Robinson Centre**, is set to become the leading aquatic center in Belfast, featuring the city's largest pool with eight lanes and state-of-the-art timing devices for competition. With the inclusion of a diving well and boards, the pool can host diving competitions as well and will serve as the home to the **Tom Daley Diving Academy**.

The **Brook Center** opened what is claimed to be the largest sensory-enabled pool in the United Kingdom and the only one of its kind in Ireland. Sensory pools use carefully planned lighting, projections and atmospherics to encourage even the most reluctant users to be more motivated to enter the pool. Once coaxed into the water, the pool can help children with cognitive disabilities develop physical skills, visual-tracking and focus-switching skills, as well as provide social interaction in a relaxing environment.

Both leisure centers are also equipped with multipurpose health and fitness studios, fully equipped gyms, sports halls and community facilities. The centers are part of a £105 (\$138) million investment in the city's leisure facilities as part of a 10-year plan to improve recreation throughout the city.

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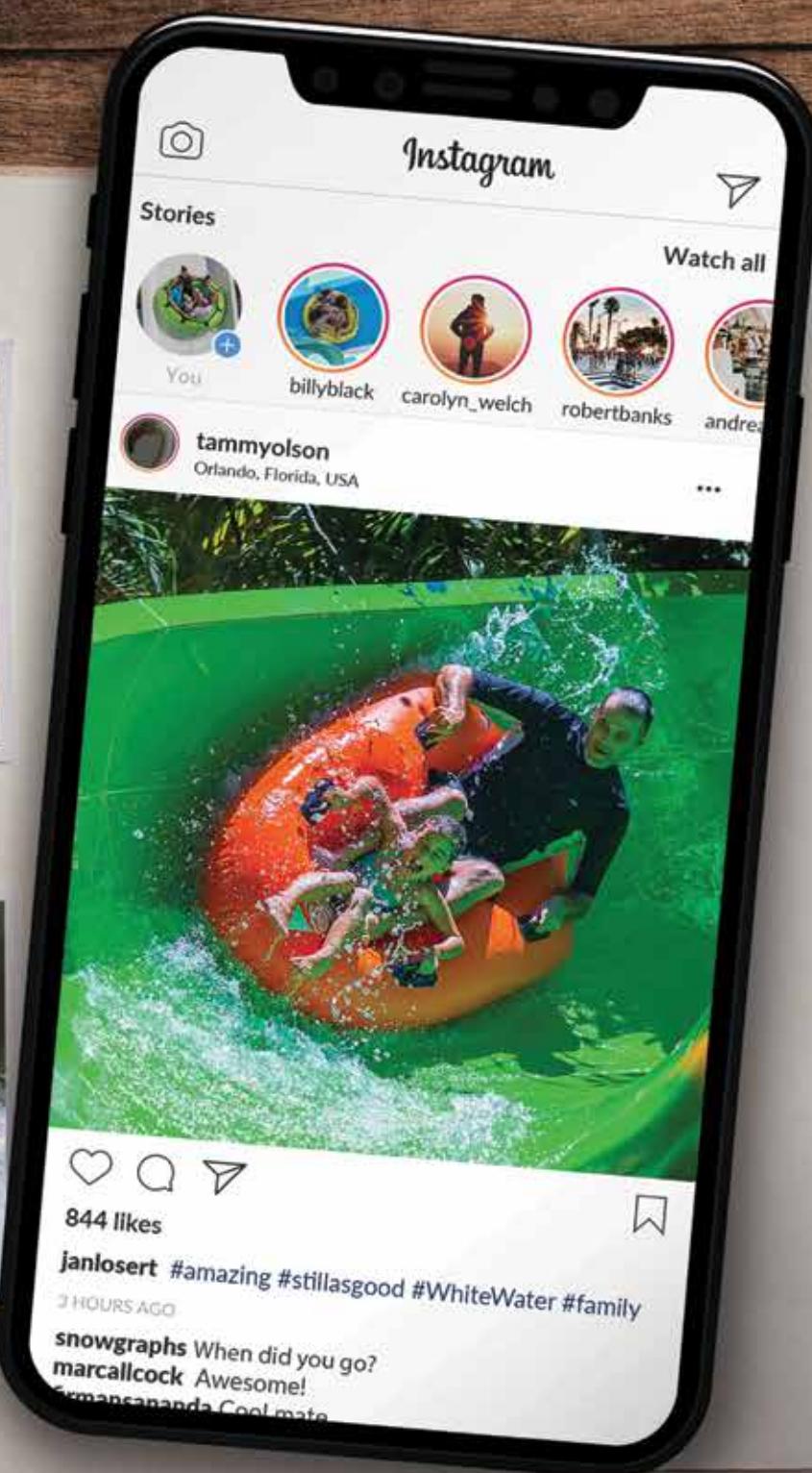
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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► **Women of Influence: Gina Claassen — page 30 / IAAPA Expo 2019 recap — page 33-41**

Family entertainment an adventure for Urban Air CEO Browning

AT: John W.C. Robinson
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

BEDFORD, Texas — "What's crazy is, as a kid, I played a lot of *Roller Coaster Tycoon* and built my own theme parks," smiled **Michael Browning**, CEO of Urban Air Adventure Parks. "It's crazy that I get to do what I loved doing as a kid through that game, but in real life. It's like a dream."

The 34-year-old Browning was the recipient of IAAPA's 2019 Young Professional of the Year award during **IAAPA Expo 2019**. The honor recognized his dedication to the attractions industry through strong leadership, teamwork and integrity while continually developing his own knowledge and experience in the ever-changing business.

It's a business in which Browning has done very well in. Currently, Urban Air Adventure Parks have 115 locations operating with another 145 under development. The locations are ever-evolving, continually popular with families and often on the cutting edge of what a fam-



Michael Browning

ily entertainment center, or indoor theme park, can offer.

"I break the industry up into three segments," Browning said. "You have trampoline parks, which is part of our heritage but not what we are anymore. They sell time. Then you have the traditional FEC such as **Main Event** and **Dave & Busters**. They sell \$7 for this and \$7 for this and \$7 for this. You're always pulling out your wallet. So it's not very experiential, it's very transactional," described Browning.

"Then we have the third category which is experiential. I put us in there, I put **KidZania**, **Candytopia**, obviously **Disney** [theme parks] all in that category. You pay one price, you can go in there,



Urban Air Adventure Parks CEO Michael Browning could not imagine being IAAPA's 2019 Young Professional of the Year without still being a big kid at heart.

COURTESY URBAN AIR ADVENTURE PARKS

and you can access anything that you're tall enough to be on. You might not get to do it all the first time, but you're getting a ton of variety and you get to create your own experience. It's something that can be different every time."

Urban Air Adventure Parks began as **Urban Air Trampoline Parks** in Dallas, Texas, in 2011. However, the company and its facilities have evolved rapidly

under Browning's leadership and vision.

"Our theory, our business strategy is that no facility based around one attraction will survive in today's consumer environment," said Browning. "Guests want curated experiences, they want a ton of variety, and they want value. When you put in just one attraction — whether it's just roller-skating or just skydiving or just bowling — you have to charge them so much to justify your business model and your investment. A lot of times there's a gap between what the guest perceives as the value and what they paid. So they leave there a little disappointed."

"What we do is put in a mix of attractions. We have a base set. We still have a little bit of trampoline because that's part of our heritage. We have rock climbing, a warrior course, a Sky Rider, a soft play playground, wall climbing and bumper cars. That's really

our base."

Unlike many other family entertainment centers, Browning's facilities are steering away from an arcade experience and coin-op games.

"When you read the FEC benchmark study, it says that arcades are the number one revenue driver in FECs," commented Browning. "But arcades in our environment don't work. It's because our consumer comes in wanting to be active, wanting to be screenless. We have some legacy locations that still have some arcades in them, but we're moving away from that. Our vision is to be safe, clean, fun, affordable, active entertainment."

It's in staying with that vision that Browning strives to keep Urban Air Adventure Parks on the crest of cutting edge, with unique attractions featured within each of its facilities.

"It's based on the market. If there's not a Main Event facility in the area, then we'll put in laser tag. If there's no iFly in the market, we'll add indoor skydiving. We have some add-on attractions that we'll do on top of our base."

The indoor skydiving is one of Browning's favorite attractions that his parks offer.

"We're the only other company in the United States that offers indoor skydiving outside of iFly. I've gotten addicted to flying," Browning states with a grin.

"We spend over \$1 million every year on either creating our own products or testing products that may or may not work because we believe that we need to lead in the industry."

"I love IAAPA [Expo], but

► **See BROWNING, page 29**



The equipment pioneered by Urban Air Adventure Parks' Immersive Reality Arena transports guests inside a fully-surrounded, 360-degree digital environment where all arena walls and trampoline floors come to life with animated gameplay imagery and cinematic sound.

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Indoor skydiving (left), offered only by Urban Air Adventure Parks and iFly in the U.S.A., and the 360-degree-flipping bumper car ride Flip Zone (right) are just some of the diverse experience-based attractions offered in the facilities. Whether it's innovating attractions or working with new franchisees, CEO Michael Browning (middle) believes being able to let out that inner child is essential for success. COURTESY URBAN AIR ADVENTURE PARKS

BROWNING

Continued from page 28

if I'm buying stuff off the show floor, I'm already too late. A lot of what I do at IAAPA [Expo] is looking for trends. The stuff that puts us to the leading edge of technology and innovation, we have to be finding before IAAPA [Expo]."

One of the company's latest innovations, currently testing at one of the company's Wisconsin locations, is a dual racing Sky Rider. Urban Air Adventure Parks' popular Sky Rider attraction works as a rail-based zipline over other attractions in the facility and around the location. Browning and his team have developed the dual version as a way for guests to interact with one another and compete in a combination race course and Sky Rider experience.

"One of my favorite experiences when I was at **Atlantis** in the Bahamas was that my daughter and I could race one another on the pyramid slide," stated Browning. That experience helped inspire the new attraction. "We'd have [guests on Sky Rider] just fly around inside the park. We would operate them like an amusement ride with blocks throughout and with a slide trigger

system. When the light turns green, the next person would go, so we'd have multiple people in the same course already. But, we wondered, what if we could make it where they could race each other?"

Testing and developing possible new attractions are part of what Browning's corporate-owned Urban Air Adventure Parks does for the company's franchisees.

"I think the esports industry is here to stay. More people watched the **League of Legends Championship** than watched the **NBA Finals**, and it gets crazy. We bought a great esports product, we spent about \$250,000 on that product to test it and, in our environment — the same as arcades — esports didn't work. At the franchisee conference last April, our franchisees were seeing it and it's beautiful. And they wanted it. But I urged them 'Guys, it looks good, but will it perform good? Or great?' It didn't work for a lot of different reasons. But we saved the franchisees from risking \$250,000 of their money, and we risked it."

Browning's willingness to take risks and innovate earned Urban Air Adventure Parks recognition as a finalist for the Best Innovation of 2019 Golden

Ticket Award with the successful launch of the world's first Immersive Reality Arena, featuring patented gaming engines and hardware products that allowed guests to literally get in the game.

The company's knack for breaking new ground in the industry is not limited to attractions. Browning has helped pioneer operations innovations as well.

"We pivoted in 2017 to say, 'We're not going to sell time. We're not going to be an FEC and sell attractions.' Guests can pay one price to get in," said Browning, but that was only the first step. "After studying the data, we saw an opportunity for a membership program. Now, for one low monthly fee, the guests can come in unlimited times a year and access the attractions. Depending upon the tier that they sign up for, there can be food and beverage components associated with that. They're good at all Urban Air Adventure Parks across the country, and right now we're up to over 180,000 members as of today — and we just launched the program six months ago."

"We [also] made an initiative to get out of concession stands and into quick-service

restaurants. I tell people now that Urban Air is a mixture of **Panera Bread** and **Wingstop**, that's my vision. A good chicken sandwich, a good salad, some great wings, we sell beer and wine. It's theme park food," commented Browning. "We want to be the place where you turn to your spouse and say 'Hey honey, what do you want to do fun with the kids this weekend?' and you'll say Urban Air. And 'let's just eat there because their food is decent and it's competitively priced.' That's what we're going for."

Even with being at the cutting edge of new ideas and concepts for the FEC market, Browning has made the customer a top priority.

"Mom is our customer and we try to do everything we can to make it mom-comfortable. Kids are easy to please when you have the best attractions on the planet. But mom wants to know that they're clean and that they're safe and that there's some type of benefit other than just having fun. They're socializing, they're problem-solving.

"Safety is the number one priority for us and it needs to be when you're serving 30 million guests in a year. The majority of injuries in the history of our company have come from the trampolines because people are jumping up and down. It's a very uncontrolled environment where you don't know their next move. The first thing we did was try to decrease 'double-bouncing.' In the tramping industry, there are certain facilities that would have very long trampolines. On a long trampoline, you can't prevent double-bouncing, because it's one surface. We moved to 9-foot-by-9-foot square on our trampolines in our facilities

a long time ago, because that takes away a lot of the double bouncing. We started there and we're always looking at ways to improve the experience because mom has got to feel that we love their kids and we want them to be safe."

With over 250 facilities open or in the planning stages, Urban Air Adventure Parks' family has grown considerably from its beginnings in Dallas. Browning, however, has found ways to keep that original vision shared throughout the franchisees and with all of the family's new members.

"We have an Urban Air University which is an online university, that is continuing to cast our vision. Vision, people, capital: I see that as my job as a CEO."

Having built Urban Air Adventure Parks from the ground up, Browning is a bit of an expert when it comes to vision and people. He uses that expertise continually as the company grows through new hires and franchisees.

"One of the first things we do when going through the recruitment process with franchisees is take them to the park. We spend a half a day at the park with them. We want to release the inner kid. It's in there, no matter your age. If the franchisee can't get in there and experience the attractions, have a good time, laugh and smile, then they can't be in this brand."

When expounding on the company's values, Browning offered: "We say we want [employees and franchisees] to be authentic. We're humble yet we stand out in a room. I think being curious is really important. We say [franchisees] have to be gritty, you have to solve problems. They have to be able to find joy in this."

urbanairtrampolinepark.com



Active entertainment is a cornerstone of Browning's vision at Urban Air Adventure Parks. The original facility started as a trampoline park (right), quickly changing its trampolines to nine-foot-by-nine-foot squares to help ensure a safe and fun time for its guests. COURTESY URBAN AIR ADVENTURE PARKS

Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Gina Claassen is the corporate safety director of **Herschend Family Entertainment** (HFE). She has been with that company for 21 years.

HFE is touted as the nation's largest family-owned themed attractions corporation. It operates several theme parks and tourist attractions and is currently headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. Claassen is based in Branson, Missouri, with her husband, **Tony Claassen**, who works at **Silver Dollar City**, where Gina Claassen began her career.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), chair, IAAPA Facility Operations Sub-Committee and past chair of IAAPA's Exhibitor Awards Committee, speaker at IAAPA Expo and is an IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE)
- Served on NAARSO Education Committee, instructor at the NAARSO Safety Forum, received NAARSO's certifications
- Instructor at the AIMS Safety Seminar, received AIMS certifications
- Member of ASTM F24 Committee
- CrossFit Trainer

Claassen chases her passion

BRANSON, Mo. — Gina Claassen's take on life is uniquely her own.

She loves challenges, but she describes that akin to "keeping her hands in the cookie jar."

She sets goals, describing herself as "a goal-hitting person." She is spontaneous. When something happens unexpectedly, that is when she says, "Wow, I need to check that off my bucket list," even though that bucket list doesn't exist.

After 21 years at Herschend Family Entertainment, she still loves her job. She has never closed any doors to other opportunities, but she found her family and passion at HFE.

"I guess I drank the HFE Kool-Aid," she said.

Claassen grew up in Harrison, Arkansas, the Boone County, Arkansas, seat, located on the border of Arkansas and Missouri. The town is just under 35 miles south of Branson, Missouri.

Her parents, Steve and Glenda Cantrell, both came from families of dairy farmers. They were dairy farmers, too. Claassen and her older brother were raised on farmland in her dad's family. Her father's mother lived within walking distance of their home. Her mother's family lived about 20 minutes down the road.

Growing up, she helped on the farm, but what she really loved was playing team sports. She played any team sport she could find. However, Harrison was small and those opportunities were limited.

Her high school, Valley Springs High School, was, of course, small, too. There were 50 students in her gradu-

ating class. She played basketball on the high school team. When she was a sophomore, her team won state.

Claassen also played basketball after high school graduation. She was a walk-on at North Arkansas College, a two-year community college in Harrison. That walk-on quickly led to a scholarship for her.

It was her first summer after her first year of college that she got her first taste of the amusement industry. She and several friends found jobs at Silver Dollar City and carpooled there daily.

Claassen loved it. She felt like she found a family there. She worked at an attraction called Splash Harbor, where she was basically paid to water fight with kids all day.

She also met her husband, Tony Claassen, there that summer. He worked at the park's train attraction, which passed Splash Harbor.

"On days he was a conductor, I would see him as the train went by Splash Harbor," she said. "On days he was not a conductor, he was either the crossing guard or a robber. It's always been fun to say I married a train robber."

After her second year and last at the two-year North Arkansas College, she transferred to Southwest Missouri State, now called Missouri State University, where she graduated with a degree in entertainment management in 2001. She already knew where she wanted to be. Not only that, she and Tony Claassen had already married.

Upon graduation, she slipped right into her job, asking questions and finding herself hands-on at the opening of new rides.

Gina Claassen
Corporate Safety Director
Herschend Family Entertainment
Branson, Mo.



She was hands-on when the park opened Premier Rides' BuzzSaw Falls and later S&S's Powder Keg. She was on the opening team for Wildfire, a B&M coaster, and the Grand Exposition, a new area of the park that opened with 10 Zamperla rides.

"When Herschend opened Celebration City, I found myself on that team, too," she said.

She went from being an attractions supervisor to attractions manager. Her husband's expertise was in maintenance and he not only continued there, he also went back to school and earned a degree from Evangel University in 2010.

Claassen not only ran with any task she was provided, she also actually ran marathon races, half-marathon races.

In 2011, Claassen felt a shift in her focus when a ride accident fatally injured a 29-year-old U.S. Army veteran. Ride accessibility became a greater industry focus.

"This is what brought me here, she said, "to safety and to the issues

of accessibility of amusement rides."

She and other industry colleagues began having conversations and working together to drive change around physical limitations and the ability to participate on attractions."

Claassen has worked in that area since.

"There is not a 'one-size fits all' model when identifying rider requirements," she said. "Today, operators and manufacturers are working closer together to identify these requirements for each ride. More guests with disabilities are visiting our properties than ever before, and it is our responsibility to ensure their expectations are met. We want everyone to have a good time."

Claassen is still a team player. She is an industry team player, still wanting to contribute her time and her skills.

She may not run her physical races as much anymore, but she is an athlete. And this athlete doesn't seem to show any signs of not crossing finish lines.

—Pam Sherborne

ON THE MOVE

Area15, an experiential retail and immersive entertainment complex concept that will debut in Las Vegas in early 2020, has announced additions to its team.

As chief technology officer, **Mark Stutzman** will establish and implement the technical vision for the complex. Working collaboratively and cross-functionally with development and construction, design, marketing, production and operations, he will build the technology infrastructure that enhances the visitor experience. An entrepreneur and product executive, Stutzman brings more than 20 years of experience delivering effective and scalable applications.



Stutzman

Hospitality and arena executive **Michael Casper** has been tapped as head of partnerships. He will be responsible for implementing and developing commercial and strategic relationships with outside companies and brands. Casper, who comes to Area15 from **Hard Rock Hotel Las Vegas**, began his career at **Anschutz Entertainment Group** (AEG), where he was part of the opening team of **The O2 Arena** in London and later became director of partnerships for the **Ülker Sports Arena** in Istanbul, Turkey.



Casper

As head of talent and promotion, **Howard Weiss** will oversee talent booking, special events and event promotion — including festivals, concerts, comedy shows, and artist and celebrity appearances. In addition, he will handle live entertainment activations and ticketing for the complex. Weiss brings nearly 20 years of experience in hospitality and entertainment, having held leadership roles in companies including **Element Hospitality**, **AEG Presents**, **Penn National Gaming**, **Pure Management Group** and **Caesars Entertainment Corp.**



Weiss

LAI Games has announced the appointment of **John Bugh** as senior vice president of global sales and business development, based in Dallas. A sales veteran, Bugh will be responsible for accelerating and driving top-line annual growth for LAI as well as developing and executing the company's worldwide sales strategies, processes and methodologies. In addition, Bugh will assume general management of LAI's sister company, **The Locker Network**. While new to the out-of-home entertainment industry, Bugh brings three decades of experience with U.S. and international software and technology companies — having held senior-level leadership roles with companies such as **Intuit**, **ECi Software Solutions**, **Intelenet Global Services** and **Mphasis**.



Bugh

Dallas-based **Topgolf Entertainment Group** has named **Stuart Foster** chief marketing officer of the company's U.S. venues. Reporting to Global Chief Marketing Officer **Brian Radics**, Foster will lead the overall vision and strategy to drive awareness of Topgolf's U.S. venue business while generating engagement, visitation and brand loyalty. Previously, Foster served as vice president of global brand marketing at **Hilton Worldwide**, where he was responsible for global positioning, strategy and marketing for the **Waldorf Astoria**, **Conrad**, **Hilton** and **DoubleTree** hotel and resort brands. Foster also provided leadership at major brands including **L'Oréal** and **Moët Hennessy** across multiple disciplines.



Foster

Barbara Smith is leaving her post as chief executive of the **Royal Zoological Society of Scotland**, operator of the **Edinburgh Zoo** and **Highland Wildlife Park**, to join London-based multinational alcoholic beverage company **Diageo**. There, Smith will serve as general manager of the company's flagship **Johnnie Walker Princes Street** immersive visitor experience, expected to open by the end of 2020, and also run the company's network of 12 distillery visitor centers in Scotland. She previously led other major attractions, including **Edinburgh Castle** and **Chester Zoo**.



Edinburgh

OBITUARIES

Jack Silar, park manager and safety official

HERSHEY, Pa. — Jack Scott Silar, 71, a military and attractions industry veteran, passed away Dec. 3. He was 71.

Silar was born July 20, 1948, in West York, Pennsylvania, to Jack V. and Cordelia (Bridgen) Silar. He was a 1966 graduate of Hershey High School and a 1968 graduate of Harrisburg Area Community College.

Silar earned the rank of sergeant in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He attended the U.S. Army Intelligence School at Fort Holabird in Baltimore and then completed a tour of duty in Vietnam as a counterintelligence specialist. Among the military honors he earned were two Army Commendation Medals for meritorious service during operations against a hostile force.

Following his tour of duty, Silar landed a series of management and executive positions with Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, including general manager of Hersheypark and vice president of sports and entertainment. Additionally, he owned White Rose Amusements as well as Midway Management Services, an amusement safety consultant company.

Silar served as board chair for the National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO) and as a board member for the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions. He was also a past president and board chair of the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Assn. and served on various board committees for the Pennsylvania Showmen's Assn.

Silar was a member of the Messiah Lutheran Church in



Jack Silar

Harrisburg; Brownstone Masonic Lodge No. 666 in Hershey and the Harrisburg Consistory. He was also a life member and former chief officer of the Hershey Volunteer Fire Co.

Gary Chubb, retired senior director of maintenance for Hersheypark and a five-decade colleague and friend of Silar, described Jack as "someone who was respected for not only his leadership and knowledge but also for his ability to solve problems and provide straightforward responses to a variety of challenges."

Chubb witnessed Silar's efforts to bring amusement parks and traveling shows together to improve various aspects of the industry, particularly in the area of safety. As an amusement ride safety inspector, Silar befriended many amusement park managers, show owners, state ride regulators and independent ride inspectors as well as numerous ride manufacturers and suppliers.

"I learned a ton of things from Jack after I graduated from high school," Chubb said. "When I won the 'draft lottery' in the early 1970s, he advised me. We were firefighters together in Hershey for many years, and he was my boss for a number of years at Hershey

[Entertainment].

"We both owned several rides and were '40 milers' together along with our respective families. When I had an opportunity to expand my job knowledge and leave Hersheypark for Dutch Wonderland, he advised me and we attended many amusement ride safety seminars together. We were also involved with NAARSO and worked closely to organize and operate the annual PACE Ride Safety Seminar."

"I will truly miss him for being a leader, confidant, business partner and friend."

Rick Smith, president of NAARSO, also valued Silar's friendship.

"Jack was an advocate of amusement ride safety and loved our industry," Smith said. "He served as chairman of the board of NAARSO and also ran the Outreach Safety Seminar Program."

"There were times that a student would approach Jack after class and ask him a question about inspections, and Jack would say, 'You bring the Budweiser and we will sit down and talk.'

"The amusement industry has lost a great man. He will be missed."

Silar is survived by his wife of more than 49 years, Gretchen (Rhoads) Silar; daughter Lori (Silar) Zarefoss and her husband, Troy; son Scott Silar (currently manager of attractions for Hershey Entertainment & Resorts) and his wife, Brooke; grandchildren Owen and Lydia Zarefoss and Jake Silar; and sister Jill (Silar) Richael and her husband, John.

—Additional reporting by B. Derek Shaw

Sergio Soriani, amusement ride manufacturer

MELARA, Italy — Sergio Soriani, director and co-owner (with his two brothers) of ride manufacturer Soriani s.r.l., died Nov. 25 after a long illness. He was 64.

Soriani's work with amusements was rooted in the work of his father, Arrigo. At the end of World War II, the elder Soriani opened a small workshop to manufacture and repair agriculture equipment. Almost immediately, there arose an opportunity for him to produce a simple fair attraction for a carnival-operating family wintering in nearby Bergantino, today also known as "Paese della Giostra" ("Village of the Merry-go-round").

After manufacturing more rides for local carnival owners in the 1950s, Arrigo began collaborating with the company SDC of Reggio Emilia and became the supplier of the



Soriani

Telecombat flat ride until the early 1970s. After Arrigo passed away in 1985, Sergio became one of the company's managing directors and developed many new attractions.

Among Soriani's most popular rides were the Polyp, Tagada, Apollo 2000, Music Express and Wind Shear. He was also instrumental in fostering the strong working relationship his company enjoyed with Zamperla Spa, starting in 1998. The partnership helped Soriani s.r.l. become one of the leading manufacturers of thrilling flat rides with attractions such as Z-Force, Turboforce, Discovery and Endeavor.

Soriani was considered the heart and soul of Soriani s.r.l. by those who knew him. He is remembered for providing the leadership, entrepreneurship and creative vision that has allowed a family-run company to survive and continue to prosper for more than seven decades.

Soriani is survived by his wife, Luana, and daughter, Giulia.

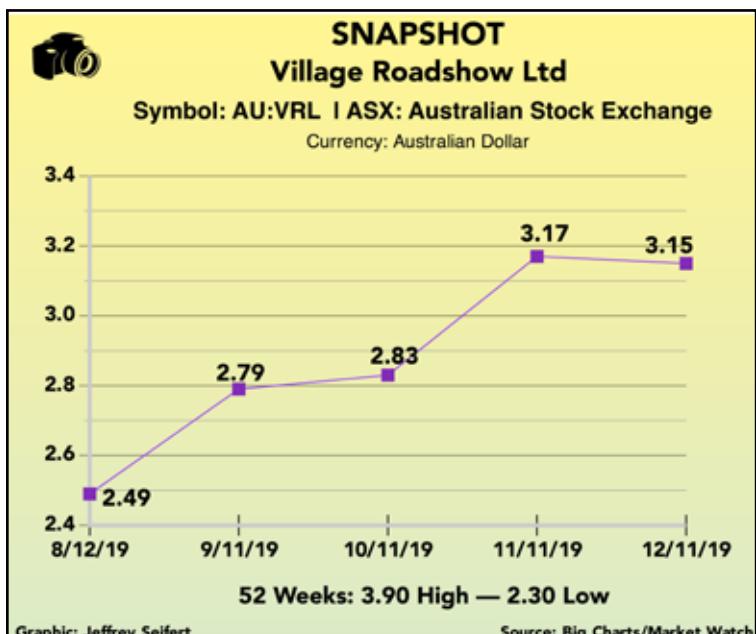
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 12/11/19	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	54.92	55.17	26.88
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	54.57	64.86	45.58
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	42.07	47.27	32.61
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	147.59	153.41	100.35
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.21	0.30	0.17
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	68.56	80.75	62.75
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	4170.00	4830.00	2855.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.00	1.86	0.83
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	15.05	17.00	10.87
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	32.11	32.29	21.61
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A. (trading suspended temporarily)	ES:PQR	MCE	13.72	14.46	9.84
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	123.32	131.04	89.48
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	901.00	1903.00	837.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	30.23	34.72	21.36
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	45.14	64.28	40.71
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	682.00	710.00	604.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	3.15	3.9	2.30

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; CSE, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; LSE, London Stock Exchange; NYSE, New York Stock Exchange; NASDAQ, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; SEHK, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; SZSE, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; TSEC, Taiwan Stock Exchange; TYO/TSE, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 12/09/19	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.050	-0.144
Midwest	\$2.966	-0.100
Gulf Coast	\$2.759	-0.175
Mountain	\$3.207	-0.032
West Coast	\$3.323	-0.034
California	\$3.904	0.017

CURRENCY		
On 12/11/19 \$1 USD =		
0.9025	EURO	
0.7596	GBP (British Pound)	
108.65	JPY (Japanese Yen)	
0.9861	CHF (Swiss Franc)	
1.4665	AUD (Australian Dollar)	
1.3233	CAD (Canadian Dollar)	

BUSINESS WATCH

Topgolf announces Asia franchise expansion

DALLAS — **Topgolf Entertainment Group** entered into a franchise agreement with **Sports Entertainment Asia, H.K., Ltd. (SEAL)**, revealing plans to open venues in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and the Philippines. Each Topgolf venue will be owned and operated by SEAL, comprising Hong Kong-based **Parkview Leisure & Entertainment Company, Ltd.**, and **SEAL TG US, LLC**. The SEAL franchise leaders are in active pursuit of premier destinations to highlight Topgolf's blend of technology and entertainment that builds and connects communities. In other company news, Topgolf is continuing its support of the U.S. military community with new service member and veteran initiatives, including planned **Topgolf Swing Suite** installations at two of the largest military bases in the country — Fort Benning in Georgia and Fort Bragg in North Carolina — and charitable contributions to veteran organizations.

Major esports arenas in works in eastern U.S.

PHILADELPHIA and MIAMI — Major esports venues have been announced in the eastern U.S. as the digital gaming trend continues to grow. In Philadelphia, work is underway on **Comcast Spectacor's** 3,500-seat, \$50 million Fusion Arena. Scheduled to open in 2021, the 60,000-square-foot venue in the city's south-end sports complex will include a training facility and host Comcast Spectacor's Philadelphia Fusion professional team. In Miami, the first in a series of worldwide esports racing arenas planned by **Millennial Esports Corp.** represents the company's next step in professionalizing the activity. The 12,000-square foot venue, expected to debut in 2020, is a massive expansion of the **Allinsports** training facility in Coral Gables, Florida. Featuring 30 racing simulators that can be raced individually or networked for global competition, the facility will train both esports and real-world racing drivers as well as host esports races.

Empire Industries gets related third-party loan

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, Canada — **Empire Industries, Ltd.**, has appointed company director **James Chui** non-executive chairman while a company that Chui controls has agreed to advance a \$2 million unsecured related third-party loan to Empire. Chui is chairman and CEO of **Excellence Raise Overseas, Ltd.**, which owns 19.9% of Empire's common shares and is advancing the loan, and is also president of **Jolly Admire, Ltd.**, which has agreed to sell its 26.5% stake in Empire subsidiary **Dynamic Entertainment Group, Ltd. (DEGL)**, to Empire in exchange for convertible preferred shares of Empire. The transaction returns to Empire 100% ownership and control of DEGL.

In brief...

- **Merlin Entertainments** has entered into a partnership agreement with **Global Zhongjun Cultural Tourism Development Co., Ltd.**, to build and operate a Legoland resort in Sichuan Province in western China. The resort will be located within the Tianfu New Area in the city of Meishan, 60 kilometers south of Chengdu, and is scheduled to open by the end of 2023.

- Fresh off the initial opening phase of its **American Dream** retailainment complex in East Rutherford, New Jersey, **Triple Five Worldwide** has announced an agreement with **Al Akaria Saudi Real Estate Co. for Arabian Dream**, a US \$5 billion retailainment complex billed as the world's largest near Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Construction is expected to begin in the first half of 2020.

- The political crisis in Hong Kong has impacted **Hong Kong Disneyland Resort**. Months-long protests in the city could result in a \$275 million drop in operating income at the property in the current fiscal year ending September 2020, **The Walt Disney Co.**'s parks division reported.

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IAAPA EXPO 2019 – ORLANDO

Industry struts its stuff at IAAPA Expo 2019 in Orlando

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — From the Orange County Convention Center to the ample Orlando-based entertainment venues and to local restaurants and hotels, by all accounts, the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo 2019 was a huge success.

Just take a look at the numbers produced by the event held Nov. 18-22. Preliminary figures show there were 42,600 registered guests in town for the park industry's biggest show. More than half of those attending, 27,800, were qualified buyers hunting the newest and best from the 1,146 exhibiting companies on the 585,000-net-square-foot trade show floor. In addition, there were outdoor exhibits and the custom-built Exploration Station structure.

There seemed no denying that the amusement industry is experiencing a growth and everyone seemed thrilled by it.

"With the largest attendance in IAAPA Expo history, this year's event is a testament to the continued growth and strength of the attractions industry worldwide," said Hal McEvoy, president and CEO, IAAPA. "It's been an incredible week bringing together this vibrant and diverse community that continues to evolve in ways we've yet to imagine."

On the trade show floor, exhibitors were excited at the foot traffic. This was Robbert Dekkers' first IAAPA show to exhibit on his own with Wood Design Amusement Rides B.V., based in the Netherlands.

"It has been a very good show," Dekkers said. "It was a very good choice to go solo this year."

Michael Bridgman, a co-founder of MajorMega, was on hand exhibiting the company's new Hyperdeck immersive VR studio.

"This has only been out about three months," Bridgman



The Orange County Convention Center in Orlando hosted the most-attended IAAPA Expo to date in 2019.

AT/TIM BALDWIN

said. "We have already sold the floor model to Andretti (Indoor Karting and Games)."

Larry Steele, Bob's Space Racers, said they were having a great show. One of their newest products displayed on the trade show floor this year was the attendant-free version of its Whopper game they created especially for family entertainment centers but could go anywhere.

"We are seeing an explosion in attendant-free games over the last couple of years," Steele said. "Even the parks are going for them."

New exhibitors also were impressed with the business they were getting from the trade show. Richard Berwick, Twindom, a company that uses full body 3D scanners to create 3D printed figurines, had pulled in some business.

One of the staples at the show is Lil' Orbit, which held a steady stream of donut-eaters wanting samples. The 2019 IAAPA show was the company's 36th year. Lil' Orbit's Brian O'Gara guessed they would give out roughly 21,000 of their little donuts during the 2019 show.

There were 38 scheduled press conferences on the show floor last November set by ex-

hibitors announcing their brand new products. Some of those included: Alterface's "Popcorn Revenge," based on Alterface's Erratic Ride technology which deploys a non-linear ride concept; CAVU Designwerks' new self-driving vehicle, the next generation of trackless dark ride vehicles; the Producers Group / Extreme Engineering new ride concept "The Dark Rider" and Intercard's new iReader Impulse.

Maurer, together with Carnival Cruise Line, introduced its ride car for the first-ever roller coaster to operate on a cruise ship. Maurer added a little glamor to the announcement by having NBA superstar Shaquille O'Neal to assist in the reveal.

Other highlights of the week included a keynote presentation by Christine Duffy, president of Carnival Cruise Line, at the GM and Owners' Breakfast. Attendees learned from industry experts and heard from George Walker, creative director, Universal Creative Studio during "Lunch and Learn: The Emergence of Authentic Reality" and Nely Galán, entrepreneur and author, during "Coca-Cola Presents: How to Become Self Made and Have a Rich Life in Every Way."

With more than 100 edu-



cational experiences, attendees also participated in classroom sessions and behind-the-scenes tours throughout the week.

IAAPA Celebrates at Universal Studios Florida was a sell-out with 2,493 tickets sold. Buses took most attendees to the park, but an early-bird IAAPA crowd stood outside the gates so they could be some of the first in line to ride Universal's Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure.

Also this year, IAAPA celebrated 25 years of partnership with Give Kids the World (GKTW). Expo attendees raised approximately \$155,000 for GKTW Village through corporate donations and an annual series of events, including a golf tournament, motorcycle ride, fun run and walk.

Since first partnering with GKTW, IAAPA has raised more than \$1 million, helping make magical memories for

children with critical illnesses and their families.

As if all this excitement wasn't enough, IAAPA was able to give 150 official tours to the association's new headquarters building in Orlando. The custom-built headquarters, uniquely designed to celebrate and support IAAPA members from around the world, opened this past summer. As the industry grows, IAAPA feels the new headquarters is situated to provide more and more support.

And the industry is growing, according to the latest IAAPA Global Theme and Amusement Park Outlook Report (2019-2023) that states "theme and amusement parks worldwide are expected to entertain more than 1.16 billion people in 2019 and generate \$52 billion in revenue.

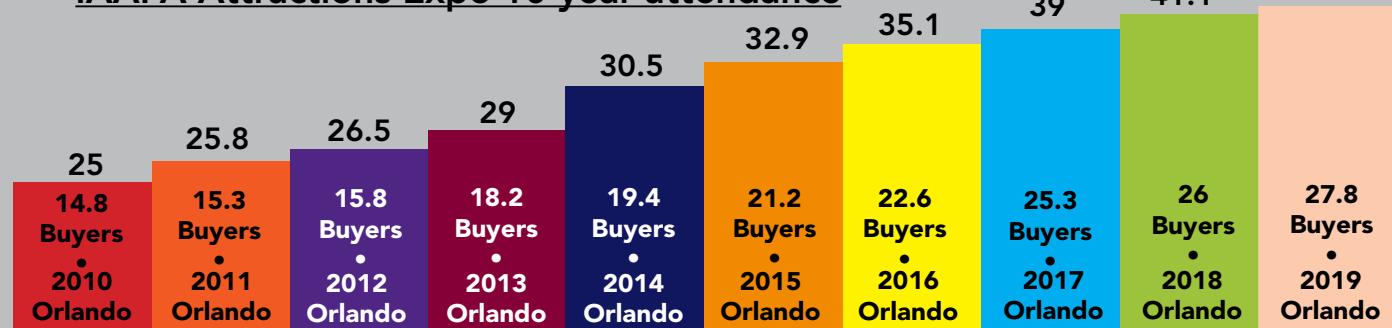
Dates for the IAAPA Expo 2020 have been set for Nov. 17-20.

•iaapa.org

FAST FACTS



IAAPA Attractions Expo 10-year attendance*



*in thousands (AT Research)

IAAPA EXPO 2019 – ORLANDO

Manufacturers, suppliers offer infinite options for park operators

IAAPA Expo 2019: New rides, new concepts, new innovations

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — With the amusement industry enjoying continued strength, the offerings from ride manufacturers at the recent IAAPA Expo showed sustained momentum. New ideas are being brought to the tradeshow each year to lure park operators into that future selection.

Roller Coasters

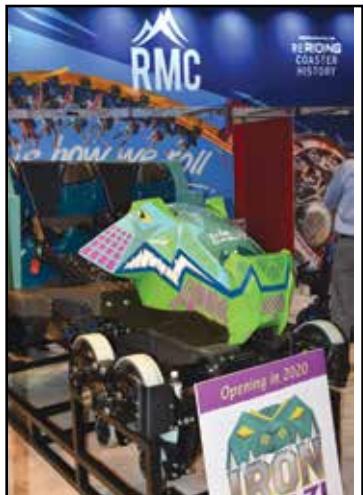
An expected tradition is for press announcements from the tradeshow floor to offer numerous "reveals" on the first day. The Tuesday morning lineup showcased **Busch Gardens Tampa** Bay's Iron Gwazi car at the **Rocky Mountain Construction** booth. Adorned with a toothy crocodile, the snazzy coaster vehicle was a crowd pleaser.

"One of the unique things about Iron Gwazi is the sheer height and length of it; it's going to be so jam packed," said **Jake Kilcup**, COO, Rocky Mountain. "I'm a backseat rider. The way **Alan [Schilke, Ride Centerline]** puts these things together, the pairing of the elements and the pacing is always unique. Every one of them takes on its own personality."

RMC will also be debuting Jersey Devil Coaster at **Six Flags Great Adventure**, which will be an evolution of the Raptor single rail coaster.

"We previously showed what we could do with Raptor track. We proved the concept," said Kilcup. "Jersey Devil will have a longer track and increase the throughput — and increase the thrill. Six Flags has been a great partner. We've always wanted to get one of our rides in the park in Jersey."

Kilcup said this new version would also have technical changes that will improve maintenance capabilities.



The toothy crocodile lead car of Iron Gwazi (left) was a fun reveal early in the show. The S&S booth showed their pride with the Golden Ticket win for The Steel Curtain (middle). Infinity Flyer trains from GCII (right) are a new Class 5 vehicle that can safely take riders upside down. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON; TIM BALDWIN

S&S – Sansei Technologies had garnered buzz prior to the show with the introduction of its Axis coaster concept. Company officials were pleased with the response.

"The feedback we are getting is very positive," said **Preston Perkes**, executive director of administration. "Everyone wants to know what it feels like and where it is going. Coming into the show after blowing up the internet has given us a lot of opportunity. They knew what they were looking for before they got here."

During the Expo, S&S released a 2,000-foot layout that included nine exhilarating elements.

"Our designer is designing like crazy as we speak," said **Pete Barto**, director of sales. "We have a little bit of a mixed bag between those interested in a small version or a big version, but people are actually looking at bigger, which is surprising. We've even had interest in the prototype model."

Barto reported the interest in the company's swings and towers is also ongoing. He also teased that there were new twists being developed for S&S' 4-D

Free Spin coaster but wasn't ready to discuss those at the show. Multiple orders for the 4-D coaster are in production as well.

"In terms of numbers sold, it is our most successful coaster," Barto said.

A vehicle from the award-winning Steel Curtain coaster from **Kennywood** was on display.

"We want people to see how comfortable it is. The Steel Curtain has definitely opened people's eyes to the quality of the product we're doing and the uniqueness that we provide," said Barto.

Intamin, which had two coaster vehicles on display — **Busch Gardens Williamsburg**'s Pantheon and **Universal Orlando**'s Hagrid Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure (the star of the Thursday night IAAPA Celebrates social) — experienced a solid week of meetings.

"I can hardly remember a busier first day," said **Sascha Czibulka**, executive vice president, Intamin Amusement Rides.

"Looking back on what we've done on the LSM launch coaster, we are excited to have an installation in North America with Pantheon at Busch Gardens," he said. "Hagrid was

about story telling; Pantheon will be about the coaster."

Czibulka is pleased with the lineup of new installations for 2020. He is excited about a spinning launched coaster headed to **Futuroscope**. "It's the first coaster in the park's 30-plus year history. When it comes to launched coasters, Intamin really does have the cutting-edge advantage because we can choose the right propulsion system."

A vertical lift, multi-inversion coaster along with a spinning coaster are headed to China. Projects on the horizon also include family coasters. Other installations will be a 45-meter coaster wheel, a freefall tower, rapids ride and hyper splash.

Intamin's portfolio continues to expand. One new product in immersive attractions was revealed to select clients. It involved a tower ride and media content. Hot Racer is a family thrill coaster the company is also now rolling out, which features single inline seating and a tire launch. Intamin has sold the first of this type. Giga Splash is a large water ride which Czibulka terms "a spectacular, 2020 state-of-the-art Shoot-the-Chutes." It

features 24 passenger boats and a 40-meter vertical lift, followed by an 87-degree steep drop and a camel-back hill that produces a bit of airtime.

Skyline Attractions expanded its Skywarp line with a fourth incarnation. Orbit was the newest kid on the block, and it offered a lot of bragging rights.

"We bring something new every year, and we've held true to that," said **Jeff Pike**, founding partner. "We took a look at what we could bring that was new, but also play to our strengths. So, to bring something new to our Skywarp lineup we asked what it would do differently. The interactivity with Orbit — because you can be in the middle of it — continues what we did with Horizon. The biggest difference with Orbit is that it has a lower price point than Horizon, which is already affordable. It lets us reach down into that FEC market."

With this new incarnation, Orbit features an airtime hill and an inversion, yet does not require the tilting seats that made Horizon distinct.

"We still get an inversion, we still get airtime, we still get positive Gs. It's fast; you do forward and backward — you put all those elements of a thrilling ride together. You do it in just a smaller and more affordable package," said Pike.

Vekoma has numerous projects in the works. Four launched coasters are scheduled to open in 2020, along with several family and suspended coasters — more than 10 in all.

A big project already in the erection stage is Abyssus at **Energylandia** (Poland). A double launch coaster, Abyssus will



Intamin has added a single rail in-line roller coaster dubbed Hot Racer (left) to its portfolio. In a surprise evening reveal, Great Coasters International unveiled steel sections of track to allow the company's coasters to do inversions (right).

COURTESY INTAMIN; AT/DAVID FAKE

► See **ATTRACTIOnS**, page 35

IAAPA EXPO 2019 – ORLANDO



Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters showcased chameleon paint on its display cars (left). Orbit is the latest iteration of Skyline Attractions's affordable Skywarp line (right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

►ATTRACTIONS

Continued from page 34

also feature four inversions, below-ground trenches, airtime hills and steep drops.

"For us, this is just one step up again when it comes to scope and size," said **Benjamin Bloemendaal**, senior concept engineer. "It's by far the longest; everything about this one is bigger than the rest. For us and our portfolio, it's a big step up."

Details were not permitted to be released, but two coasters will be going into **Erlebnispark Tripsdrill**. One will be geared toward families, while the other tries to reach that "sweet spot" of being between a family ride and an extreme ride.

"We do see a very good future in North America in the next two to four years," said **Charlotte van Etten**, account manager, looking further ahead.

Chuck Bingham of **Martin & Vleminckx Rides** commented the show was very successful with solid leads. MVR has partnered with RMC on upcoming projects outside of North America, as well as maintaining their partnership with The Gravity Group on entirely wooden coasters. In regard to lead on an RMC ride, "The customer has met with us and everything is on the table," said Bingham.

MVR is currently working on two major wooden coasters in Australia and China. Leviathan at **SeaWorld** in Australia opens in September. Jinan is the location of the second project. "We're working on something for North America, too," Bingham shared.

Kentucky Kingdom debuted its family-friendly Kentucky Flyer wooden coaster this past season. **Michael Graham** of **The Gravity Group** told *Amusement Today*, "We like that groove," in reference to the company filling a niche of mid-sized family coasters. "It's that 100 percent everyone's happy style of ride."

Partnering with MVR, the company is at work with the

two larger rides in China and Australia.

"2021 is really busy for us as well. One project is a major rework with trains, and another is a mid-sized ride," said Graham. "We're very busy; we're looking at 2022."

The company has now brought in a roller coaster parts division offering numerous products ranging from water dummies, lift motors and bases, brakes and brake linings, track lubrication and other structural and operational parts. Those details can be found at www.rollercoasterparts.com.

Great Coasters International Inc. worked some reveal magic to create two unveilings, one on the show floor and the other at an evening social function at **Fun Spot America**. At the tradeshow, the lead car of **SeaWorld San Antonio**'s new Texas Stingray was showcased. That was only the beginning.

In an unexpected move, GCII pulled the drape off a section of steel track at the Fun Spot gathering creating gasps of surprise.

Clair Hain, president, told *AT*, "I wanted to keep [the reveal] more personal. There, I was able to talk about it a little more. At the show, it would be impossible to talk about it. Next year, it will be here."

Inversions and overbanked turns require challenging maintenance on a wood track, so this created the main direction for the introduction of steel track sections. Hain said a full steel layout wasn't the impetus of this innovation, but he would be willing to work with a park. This track has no welds, which will reduce the amount of inspections compared to other style of track. GCII's steel track also will not use bolts (which require tightening), but rivets instead.

"I still want to keep the wood track as much as possible, but that will allow me to do inversions," he said.

For this concept, the company has a new line of trains.

"We had the Infinity Flyer

trains here at the booth last year. Since then, I've proven it in April," said Hain. "Now I know it works. Now it's on the market."

The new stylized trains allow for quicker turns and the ability to navigate inversions on a wood coaster. The class 4 or 5 restraints allow for riders as lows as 40 inches. The restraints don't require an over-the-shoulder harness. GCII notes that the cars have 80 percent fewer welds. The large machined parts mean reduced maintenance.

Marina Ernst-Weiderer, marketing, **Zierer**, looks forward to producing more of its Pioneer style coaster which features two types of vehicles, horses and wagons. Currently, the company is full of orders for 2020 and even some in 2021.

"Actually, family freefall towers are a top seller at the moment," said Ernst. "We also see that if you are setting up a new park, our product portfolio offers a wide selection of rides. Two new parks, one in Switzerland and one in Armenia, are opening with multiple Zierer family rides in 2020."

On the coaster front, Zierer will be providing two rides for the upcoming **Legoland New York**, in addition to family coasters at the afore-mentioned parks.

Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc., the longest running IAAPA member, enjoyed a good show. **Tom Rebbie**,



Nebulaz by **Zamperla** (left) was a show stopper on the Expo floor. **Chance Rides** will be delivering a whimsically themed carousel in 2020 (middle). **RES** supplied a new Roller Ball coaster for **Parc Spirou** in France (right). AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY RES RIDES

Mack Rides is offering the world's only looping water ride by introducing a vertical loop to its Power Splash water coaster. COURTESY MACK RIDES

president, was receiving compliments on the look of PTCI's display cars. He became aware of chameleon paint that changes colors depending upon the onlooker's perspective. Soon, he challenged Paint & Graphics Supervisor **Brad Little** to explore its advantages. End results on display were dramatic.

"We've had a lot of people stop by," said Rebbie.

He said PTCI currently is very busy. Prior to the show the company had 15 different jobs on the boards, and more came during the show. He also teases, "We have work next year no one knows about."

"We now have a third patent; that's three in two years," added Rebbie. "It [relates to] our lap bar mechanism. It is exciting that we were able to get it. What we had to go through and the time element involved ... the patent office agreed to approve it."

"**Mack Rides** has a new ride brand. Aside from our water coasters, our roller coasters and our spin rides, we have Tacumeon rides, which are focused on media-based attractions," said **Maximilian Röser**, marketing. "We have four different ride types we are promoting."

The first is a media-based dark ride, a turnkey product from the company. A new flying theater is another system from Mack Rides that uses

Mack Media for the content. **Gameplay Theater** is a circular gaming dark ride with back-to-back seating. The final attraction is the **Gamestormer Ride**, which takes a **Sea Storm** circular ride and incorporates a 360-degree immersive screen with interactive content.

New water rides were also in development that use block systems or tight footprints, as well as immersive media to bring an adventure ride experience to a boat ride. Also, Mack Rides has evolved its Power Splash water coaster with a loop for parks interested in doing a never-before-done looping water ride.

Attractions for 2020 will include a **Blue Fire** style coaster going into Australia where a reverse spike is introduced into the launch. **Six Flags Over Texas** will be debuting a Power Splash in the spring.

"We are also introducing a spinning seat option as a retrofit to our hyper and launched trains," said Röser.

Although providing an extreme indoor roller coaster at **Wonder Dome** in Doha, Qatar, in 2020, **Premier Rides**' booth was all about **Ice Breaker** at **SeaWorld Orlando**. At the unveiling of the lead car in an icy blue, President Jim Seay announced that the ride had just been topped off to the applause

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Julie Estrada (center) of Merlin Entertainments spoke at the ETF booth of the dark ride going in to Legoland New York. Henri Groels of Mondial (middle left) speaks of the advantages of the company's new flat ride, Escape. Extreme Engineering is providing the vehicle for Dark Rider from Producers Group (middle right). Ride Entertainment lit up the Skycoaster at Fun Spot America with new lighting from KCL Engineering.

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of the gathered press crowd.

Zamperla had much news to talk about. Among many park and ride announcements, were two roller coaster vehicles. The DangleZ coaster offers a unique ride experience as the vehicle can use 160 degrees of controlled motion to rotate the vehicle beyond the plane of verticality with the track (i.e. dangling over the edge). Other features are accentuated airtime hills and Tweener friendly 42-inch height requirement. The Lightning vehicle is an evolution of the Thunderbolt model. Here, seating in each row is increased to four wide, and ergonomic seating has improved comfort and a decrease in costs. A big advantage is the reduction of weight of the vehicle by one ton because of mill-machined aluminum as the main material for manufacturing making for a more affordable design in comparison to traditional heavy steel.

Flat Rides

Like Zierer, multiple companies deal in various types of rides that include roller coasters, but carry other options in the company portfolio as well.

Nothing was more mesmerizing on the show floor than **Zamperla's** new Nebulaz ride. With a steady stream of eager passengers, the rotating and spinning contraption received high praise for its motion and movement, and particular accolades were given for the Nebulaz' stylized aesthetics. It was both captivating and beautiful.

"Tweener rides address the more sophisticated child," said **Ramon Rasario**, sales director. "This is one who is too small or not yet ready for high thrill, but also no longer interested in kiddie rides. That's a big gap in the market."

Rides 4 U offered several rides in its large exhibit space. The new version of the **SBF Visa** spinning coaster had a new

vehicle on the front of a train. Resembling a hamster wheel, a circular car seats two riders who experience flips while navigating the track layout.

"The whole concept is phenomenal," said **Len Soled**, president, Rides 4 U. "The rollover car is definitely going to add curb appeal."

The coaster was purchased by **Craig's Cruisers** in Michigan. One of the alluring features to the coaster on display was the utilization of open space inside the coaster in which to fit more rides. Rides 4 U positioned multiple attractions inside the coaster.

"Both park operators and FECs have been very excited about this. Even carnivals have come by. All three markets have come by and made purchases. We've sold all the rides we've brought," Soled said.

Products on offer were an updated drop tower with wider seats and pneumatic rather than hydraulic systems. The improvements offer advantages for maintenance and longevity. **Jolly Rogers** in Ocean City, Maryland, purchased both the tower and the Mini Dance Party 360. The Mini Break Dance was sold to **Stewart Amusement** in Connecticut, while **Deno's Wonder Wheel** purchased the Skyflyer junior coaster. **Casino Pier** purchased a mini drop tower. A KMG Surf Ride set up outside was sold to **Western Playland**. **DBR Entertainment** of Florida purchased the **Fredrickson** slide.

"We've made a lot of contacts at the show," Soled said on the last day of the Expo. "We're going to be very busy between now and Christmas."

Mondial brought two new rides to the show. Surfs Up featured 16 two-passenger gondolas that had riders work in tandem with the fixed bar to create an exhilarating swinging motion.

"We can go 30 degrees inside and up to 100 degrees on the outside," said **Henri Groels**, creative designer. "It's a good

ride for children, but also exciting for teenagers as well.

Escape is a platform flat ride that can feature either 12 or 15 pairs of seats arranged in sets of three. The ride system uses free rotating gondolas that swing the riders in fun positions, but never goes upside down. Only a lap bar is required. Like Surf's Up, the height requirement is 48 inches.

"The body and the gondola want to go in a direction naturally," said Groels. "We can also make the smaller platforms go in the same direction or opposite direction of the main platform to give a different ride experience with more airtime."

He also stated that the size of each ride is customizable for a park depending upon their capacity needs.

Although **Huss** was not debuting a new ride concept at the Expo, the company was enjoying a successful show.

"We weren't expecting so much traffic, but we are constantly in discussions with new clients," said **Lars Hartmann**, international sales manager. "Some interesting projects are brought to our attention."

Hartmann was pleased that the classic rides from the company's portfolio were still popular.

"We have the Condor reintroduced with new ride systems, which we recently provided to **Tivoli Gardens**," said Hartmann. "The Condor is making a comeback."

He told **AT** that clients are appreciative of Huss' adaptability to each theme. Also, stand-alone attractions such as vacation resorts and historical areas are requesting the company's sky towers.

Jay Aquilar, vice president of sales and marketing, **Chance Rides**, felt the 2019 show was stronger than the year before.

"The train here does not go back to Wichita with us. It is going to **Montgomery Zoo**," he said.

Although Aquilar could not speak on the IP figures for a 2020 carousel, the images on display gave notable hints to its intended location.

All three **Chance** rides were ready to open with the recent debut of **Nickelodeon Universe**, with the family coaster being among the most popular rides in the park.

Chance is also working with other suppliers producing columns for upcoming projects.

Ride Engineers of Switzerland not only gave the last press announcement of the show, but one of its most memorable. As a Swiss company, RES had accordions, yodelers and mountain horns represent the firm as they showcased **Mystic River Falls** headed to **Silver Dollar City**. The company has also found a niche with its award-winning Roller Ball coasters. Two opened in 2019.

Fabbri introduced a new ride called In Control, which features 16 seats and a 43-foot height. The first Is in production to be delivered to a German showman. Another new ride called Spider is being manufactured for a French showman.

Other projects in the works include a 53-meter portable wheel for a German showman currently operating in Poland and a 40-meter Booster going to **The Prater** in Vienna.

Gosetto is supplying a two-story fun house to **Ray Cammack Shows**, as well as a custom themed two-story fun house for **Deggeller Attractions**, both for 2020.

"Gosetto is going leaps and bounds both in the park and the carnival market," said **Gina Guglielmi**, president of **Intermark Ride Group**, which represents Gosetto and other companies in the U.S. "A new park model was installed at Fun Spot just prior to [the IAAPA Expo]. Calloway Park recently took delivery of a spinning coaster."

Sunkid, in addition to producing smaller rides, including

some themed ones, has also been busy with conveyor systems for ski resorts. The most advanced ski school family resort opened a conveyor combined with animatronics. It is estimated to be 330 feet long and has an estimated capacity of more than 6,000 people an hour.

"This is the first one bringing skiing and amusements together," said **Georg Dobler**, sales and product management. "The animatronics tell about the Brothers Grimm."

"It is a little bit of dark ride along with the ski lift," added **Michael Peintner**, head of marketing.

The company is bringing in children's tower attractions for Legoland New York with new theming not seen at the Legoland properties before. Sunkid is also supplying a new train for a **Pax** coaster at **Connysland** in Switzerland. The new train will feature seats in the center of the train where riders face each other. The restraint system has been newly designed.

"We have four or five serious leads for 2020," said **Logan Checketts**, new project development, **Soaring Eagle**. "People like our combo attraction. They like multiple attractions in one location and keeping operators there in one place."

"It's a smaller footprint," added **Stan Checketts**, founder.

Both confirmed the Soaring Eagle zipline is still the strong seller. "Look at the financial performance; it keeps bringing success," said Logan Checketts.

At an evening social at Fun Spot America, **Ride Entertainment** lit up the Skycoaster with the new LED package from **KCL Engineering**, one of the companies it represents.

"From a maintenance perspective, you don't have to climb and change fixtures," said **Mark Rosenzweig**, managing director, Skycoaster. "Now they have a touch screen with infi-

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nite color combinations. It can be changed for the season or specific events."

"KCL has done roller coasters at [four locations] and up to today, they have only had to change out one fixture on all of those," said **Adam Sandy**, chief business development officer, Ride Entertainment. "From an operations and maintenance perspective, it is kind of game changing compared to [other lighting] and the energy usage."

The Ride Entertainment team also noted that **Metallbau Emmeln** has three rides going to **Legoland New York** but couldn't go into specifics. **Funtime** will be introducing Booster rides for **Six Flags St. Louis** and **The Great Escape**. At the later, Rosenzweig noted that the ride's location will be right near the road giving a vertical presence to the park. Funtime has also introduced new seating on its Booster with a round configuration with various seating options.

Dark Rides and Flying Theaters

The Producers Group introduced The Dark Rider, an integrated ride and show system that sends guests soaring and swaying through a dark ride environment. **Extreme Engineering** has partnered on the concept providing suspended vehicles from an overhead track. The ease of interchangeable themes and modular columns housing lighting, audio and control equipment bring infinite opportunities for an elevated dark ride.

"It can be installed in a very short amount of time," said **Michael Turner**, VP of global business development, The Producers Group. "The specs for our tier one system is a 15,000-square-foot building, the track is up to 500 feet in length and there are 10 show scenes. A tier four system features a tandem rider vehicle and the track is 1,500 feet long and has up to 12 scenes."

In other Extreme Engineering news, the company is working on 2020 Cloud Coaster projects in Vietnam, the Middle East and Canada.

"Through the design of each project, our engineering team had the opportunity to improve features on both the track and ride vehicle, enhancing both," said **Matt Rehnstrom**, VP of sales. "We have also designed the coaster to meet higher capacity demands, other stunning theming options and introducing interactive onboard



Adam Sandy of Ride Entertainment announces Lagotronics' The Smurfs Game Changer (left). The Erratic dark ride from Alterface was illustrated through a model (right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



blasters and audio."

John Wood, CEO, **Sally Dark Rides**, commented to AT: "We have come to realize that our dark rides, when they mature — when they get 15, 20, 25 years old — the compelling thing is for visitors to do it again. 'Remember the last time we were here, Dad? I beat you.' I've always believed the dark ride provides character and personality unique to the park it's in."

Wood is pleased that the 2019 projects at **Hersheypark** and **PortAventura** set record-paced years and season-long popularity as witnessed by the queues.

"We're moving forward on multiple projects," said Wood. "One I can't speak toward, but it is a very project. Right now, we have three we're working on in America. We're redoing a dark ride at **Santa's Village** in New Hampshire. They had built their own [in the past], but we are rebuilding from top to bottom — new car system, new floor and a new approach to the whole package. It's very cost effective. I'm excited. The other one is a new park, **Lost Island**, being built in Iowa. It's going to have a volcano theme."

On display were Garfield characters intended for a dark ride in a Six Flags park in China.

In honor of **Knott's Berry Farm**'s 100th anniversary, **Triotech** is being tapped to bring back Knott's Bear-y Tales: Return to the Fair, a throwback to a beloved ride that ran from 1975 to 1986.

"The goal for us is to capture the spirit, creativity and originality of Knott's Bear-y Tales," said **Ernest Yale**, CEO, Triotech. "The Knott's team gave us access to a wealth of archive materials that have been key in understanding the original [ride]."

Triotech is supplying the thematic scenery, gaming system and animation. Guests will travel through numerous themed scenes along the jour-

ney, including the Boysenberry Pie Factory.

Lagotronics was pleased to use The Smurfs to share the latest news of the company. Adam Sandy of Ride Entertainment, which represents Lagotronics, said The Smurfs are the characters in the company's latest Game Changer attraction which is part of the phase two of **Shimao Dream City Theme Park** in China. This phase is a Smurfs themed park, and the Lagotronics ride will be one of the key attractions.

"This specific project will be situated in an indoor area," said Sandy. "The ride is completely developed and installed by Lagotronics which includes the ride system, audio and lighting, ride and show control, interactive system and special effects."

This is the second Game Changer system for Shimao. The attraction is 12 meters by 12 meters.

"This gaming system is completely different than other systems on the show floor. It is second to none and more advanced than anything you will see here today," Sandy said at a press announcement.

"Game Changer is world's apart and continues to be the best on the market."

"It's very flexible to switch from our farm themes to the Smurfs. They gave us a fair amount of influence and we came up with the entire storyline," said **Mark Beumers**, CEO, Lagotronics. "With [an IP] you just have to gain approvals on the designs. The production is the same."

Lagotronics will also be doing a traditional dark ride at **Klotten** in Germany.

Alterface was pleased with its 2019 installations and partnered with Sally on some projects. Even more exciting, the company launched its Popcorn Revenge ride at **Walibi Belgium** which received a THEA award for Outstanding Achievement.

for Merlin Entertainments. "Legoland New York will be our largest park at 150 acres and the ninth Legoland park."

The dark ride will contain 19 vehicles that travel in sets of three. Theoretical hourly capacity of the ride is 1,300. The vehicles are ADA friendly and can be pulled aside without interrupting capacity.

Cavu is also introducing a trackless dark ride vehicle. The company boasts the Self Driving Vehicle is intelligent and can adapt to changing environments, meaning it can integrate with scenic sets, other ride vehicles and show equipment. The advantage the company points out is that downtime due to track interruption is eliminated as the vehicles can identify objects and navigate around them.

Interestingly, **Cavu** searched out self-driving vehicles in the manufacturing industry and determined the right fit for the company's new systems. The platforms run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with a 99 percent uptime in warehouses around the country. The proven technology can achieve up to 10 mm of accuracy.

"What makes our vehicle different is that it is self-driving, so we don't have to follow any track on the floor," said **Mark Stepanian**, VP of innovation and engineering. "It has sensors and lasers that are constantly scanning its environment, looking for things in its way and navigating around them. This allows for integration in real time media. If guests misbehave, we can change the path of the ride experience on the fly."

Simworx was also touting a dark ride vehicle. "Going the cordless, trackless was pretty key to us," said **Terry Monkton**, CEO. "This vehicle can drive like a standard car — forward, curves, it can move sideways, it can reverse and rotate itself 360 degrees. In doing a show layout, we think it provides flexibility to create some innovative ride layouts."

Dubbed Automated Guidance Vehicle, it has been three years in development. It has a rapid charge time and takes a charge during a load and unload cycle. The vehicle also features three degrees of freedom on-board motion. Each vehicle seats eight.

"They can perform with other vehicles," said Monkton.

Simwork is also offering a Mini Flying Theater. "We wanted to reach that sweet spot for all our clients." It seats 20 or 24 on one floor-loading system before flying passengers with their feet dangling free.

Water park industry exhibits continued growth during Expo 2019

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — Once again the water attractions industry has seen vigorous growth this past year and shows no signs of slowing down. Indoor and outdoor water parks continue to open at an unprecedented rate, in both the private and public sector. Several large resort projects have either recently opened or are on track to open in 2020 including one of the largest in the country — the long awaited **DreamWorks Water Park** at the **American Dream Meadowlands** in New Jersey.

Suppliers continue to provide innovation in order to expand attractions offerings and keep the industry new and fresh. *AT* takes a look at some of the highlights of what the industry is doing to create new experiences that keep guests coming back for more.

Postponed from its planned November 27 opening, the indoor Dreamworks Water Park will include the world's largest indoor wave pool — commanding 1.5 acres and 1.5 million gallons of water — the world's longest Hydro-Magnetic uphill water coaster, the tallest indoor water slide and 38 more water-slides with 15 attractions.

First proposed in 1994, the on-again, off-again project has finally started opening in stages with the **Nickelodeon Universe Theme Park** coming on line in October 2019. Big Snow, an indoor snow park was scheduled to open in December. The shopping mall is supposed to open in March 2020.

Things are looking much better in the Lone Star State where **Kalarahi Resorts** is on track to bring its distinctive African-themed resort to Round Rock, Texas, in November 2020. Farther South in the New Braunfels and Galveston areas, **Schlitterbahn**'s new owner, Ohio-based Cedar Fair, is hard at work investing \$20 million to upgrade the properties. Having just celebrated 40 years as a water park, Schlitterbahn, along with **Disney** and **Wet'n'Wild** were the pioneers of the water park industry.

Great Wolf Resorts, also under new ownership, is readying its property in Manteca, California, for a 2020 opening and has its sights set on new locations in Mexico and Great Britain.

The folks who brought the **Wilderness at the Smokies** Resort to Sevierville, Tennessee,



Polin's Futura Form presents the historic rock carvings of Göbekli Tepe in a colorful, futuristic display (left). Polin had on display a model of its massive Time Rider waterslide (right). AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

are hard at work on the Soaky Mountain 50-acre outdoor water park which is anticipating a summer 2020 opening.

These are just a few of the many projects guests can look forward to in 2020 and beyond. *AT* takes a look at some of the innovations that were presented at the 2019 IAAPA Attractions Expo.

WhiteWater West has several projects in the works for 2020. Announced at the show is the installation of the first SlideWheel In North America. Hercules will be installed at **Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park** in Wisconsin Dells. **Nick Laskaris**, owner and president of Mt. Olympus, was on hand at the show to help with the announcement. WhiteWater struck a licensing deal with **Wiegand Waterrides** at last year's IAAPA Euro show to market and manufacture the unique rotating water slide. Another SlideWheel will make its way to **Aquatar**, a unique water park to be constructed on a rocky atoll in Doha, Qatar. The park, said to be the largest single contract in history, will feature 48 slides, including 18 on a single iconic tower — the tallest tower WhiteWater has ever built. Among those slides will be a WhiteWater Abyss that starts 132 feet in the air. That project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021.

Looking back over last year's projects, WhiteWater took home a Brass Ring Award in the Best New Product category for a first-of-its kind fusion water-slide, the Over/Under slide at **Guangzhou Sunac Water Park** in China. The interactive, multi-player game, challenges all six riders on a raft to work together to achieve a longer ride. Using technology originally devel-

oped for SlideBoarding, players must respond to color cues within the slide. As the raft enters the manta section, if the team has scored enough points, then a blast from water jets will propel the raft over the edge of the manta wing and into a longer runout. If the team does not have enough points, the raft will oscillate back and forth within the manta and exit into the loser's pool.

Another Brass Ring was awarded to WhiteWater's Lava Drifting attraction at **Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park**, China. This record-breaking ride combines several attractions including multiple elevated fiberglass sections with friction strips that cause the rafts to spin as they slide down the channel. The spinning rapids sections are separated by a traditional whitewater rapids flume in which boats are tossed about in the waves as they proceed down the channel. The finale includes a WhiteWater Manta slide. Multiple lifts bring the boat to the top of each slide section, and the flume channel includes tunnels and rock work depicting a volcano theme.

Other projects announced for 2020 include four new slides for Six Flags Parks, including the world's tallest water coaster at Six Flags Great America's Hurricane Harbor. Five new slides will go to Palace Entertainment properties including a Family Raft Sawtooth Manta at **Lake Compounce** in Connecticut. In Texas, **Aquatica San Antonio** will receive two body slides incorporating AquaLucent special effect lighting patterns, giving riders a dizzying light show. A second SeaWorld property, **Adventure Island** adjacent to **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay**,



will introduce Solar Vortex, America's first WhiteWater Twin Tailspin slide.

Last year **Polin Waterparks** introduced the development of its glassy waterslide — a fully transparent fiberglass slide. Although the location could not yet be given, **Sohret Pakis** of Polin indicated that an installation of the unique, clear slide will be made in 2020.

In order to provide a more themed environment, Polin introduced **Futura Form** in 2012, a composites manufacturing company under the Polin Group. On display were some of the products created by Futura Form, based on the recent discoveries at the archeological site **Göbekli Tepe**, in southeast Turkey that has revealed massive carved stones dating back 11,000 years. Futura Form has captured some of those remarkable carvings and re-imagined them in a futuristic colorful display that merges that past with the future.

In keeping with the past/future theme, Polin's latest bowl slide is called Time Rider. The brand-new ride features one of the largest bowls ever created and offers two alternate paths. Riders enter the slide complex through a wormhole created by special lighting and fog effects to create a mystical environment. The wormhole takes guests over the bowl where they can observe others enjoying their Time Rider experience while waiting in line. The path of the high-capacity, six-passenger raft is controlled by random water jets which will guide the raft down one path or the other.

Guests will not know which path they will take when they enter the ride. The entire slide complex is impressive, standing nearly 60 feet tall and featuring bright colors and dazzling

space/time-inspired patterns.

ProSlide Technology Inc. has been going gangbusters with its RocketBlast/Flying Saucer water coasters. The dueling version installed at **Splashway Waterpark**, in Sheridan, Texas (AT August 2019) garnered an IAAPA Brass Ring Award for best new water ride. Another combo slide, that adds a water jet propulsion over a horizontal section is under construction at **Holiday World** in Santa Claus, Indiana. As ProSlide continues to fine-tune the water-jet propulsion technology, the uphill portions are able to use higher gradients on the incline. Right now, a RocketBlast coaster's uphill section can be just as steep as ProSlide's Hydromagnetic Rocket.

Although the technology has been around a little longer, ProSlide is still actively promoting its Hydromagnetic Rocket, with the longest one in existence getting ready to open at the Dreamworks Waterpark at the Meadowlands, New Jersey.

Although the water park was not yet open during the show, **Andreas Tanzer**, director of research, design & standards, indicated that water has been running and the slides had been tested and validated. ProSlide personnel and Dreamworks lifeguards have all ridden the slides. "Everything tested very, very well; we are very happy with the results," said Tanzer. He also indicated that more Hydromagnetic Rocket slides are in the works, but he was unable to disclose locations.

The saucer slides continue to be popular whether combined with blast technology or simply flowing downhill. The saucers now come in multiple sizes accommodating smaller,

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two-person inline rafts, larger three- to four-person inline rafts, as well as a huge saucer than can accommodate a six-person round raft. Tanzer indicated we should see more of the larger saucers combined with a ProSlide Mammoth river.

Looking to the future, Tanzer indicated that six-person rafts are also in development to utilize RocketBlast technology. The rafts can be either round or inline with three rows of two passengers. Some big projects on the horizon include two or three in Saudi Arabia that could potentially rival Universal's massive **Volcano Bay**, if they come to fruition. Expect to see projects in North America, Europe and a few marquee projects that should be announced in the next few months.

ProSlide, as well as the rest of the industry, are developing projects that are more conscientious of visitors with special needs, whether physical handicaps, or mental challenges such as autism, focusing on rides with less noise and stimulation, as well as providing calming attractions or areas for relaxation.

Aquatic Development Group was also reveling in awards having picked up two WWA leading edge awards for its **Island H2O Live** projects at **Margaritaville Resort Orlando**, and the **Kartrite Hotel & Indoor Water Park** in New York's Catskills Mountains region. Currently in the works is the 50-acre **Soaky Mountain Waterpark** in Sevierville, Tennessee. That \$90 million water park broke ground last July and is currently slated for a summer 2020 opening. The "mountain-modern" themed water park will be home to more than 11 innovative water attractions designed to accommodate guests of all ages and thrill levels including a 35,000-square-foot wave pool and a 24,000 square-foot wave river system that winds its way through the park. Other features that guests can look forward to include an ADG adventure lagoon featuring a Wibit water obstacle course, a flat-water cabana pool, and double FlowRider. The water park is expected to draw 400,000 visitors annually.

ADG has a couple of more irons in fire — or pool, so expect to see additional project announcements in the near future.

Vortex Aquatic Structures International continues to sup-

ply splashpads, aquatic play structures and architectural displays for city parks, hotels, resorts, shopping centers and commercial spaces. Among the products was Hop N°2 — textured stones that spray soft jets of water when they are stepped on. Situated level with the ground, the stones are accessible to children of all ages and abilities. Younger children will learn the principles of cause and effect as they instantaneously see the result of each step as a stream of water is spurted into the air. The stones can also help promote balance and coordination.

The creative minds at **Wiegand.Waterrides** whose previous inventions include the massive SlideWheel, have come up with more groundbreaking attractions. Slide Coaster uses a pair of track-mounted pusher arms to accelerate a two-person raft uphill from 0 – 30 mph in mere seconds. The arms are mounted to a central coaster track placed between two waterslide channels. The coaster track contains a set of LIMs designed to provide a maximum acceleration of 0.8 Gs. A cart mounted to the track has two arms that extend to each side to engage rafts in the waterslide channel. The two rafts are launched simultaneously up the water channel and once reaching the top, will take off to the left or right and proceed down waterslides that can either be mirrored or have a unique layout. Once at the top, the arms lift up, the catch cart returns to the home position and the arms are lowered to engage another pair of rafts. The actual length and inclination of the launch track can be customized to meet the needs of each client. The layouts of the slides can be custom designed of molded fiberglass or stainless steel. Theoretical capacity of the Slide Coaster is 720 people per hour. The launch track can be

outfitted with custom lighting and sound systems.

A second significant new attraction is the Lotus Slide. Utilizing the wave wall concept, Wiegand has adapted the slide to utilize FRP (Fiber-glass reinforced plastic) and stainless steel to produce a double wave-wall slide that resembles a pair of oversized lotus petals. The slide can be used with a one-, two-, three- or four-person rafts and will not only provide a visual delight, but two moments of near weightlessness. Two slides can be intertwined off of one slide tower to increase capacity and provide a more visually stunning slide.

Wiegand Maelzer, originally made a name for itself with its stainless-steel slides, the first of which is still in operation since 1981. Stainless steel is the company's forte, but it can also supply slides constructed of fiber-glass reinforced plastic (FRP) or a combination of both. After 12 years with the company **Rainer Maelzer** went on to pursue other opportunities and the company became Wiegand.Waterrides.

Empex Watertoys offers an impressive collection of unique, colorful and creative water play devices. Wyeth Tracy told AT that many of his ideas come from his clients. When a park in Texas was looking for western-themed watertoys, Tracy developed the Aquawest line of products. Another client suggested a castle theme so Aquacastle was designed with an Aquaking and queen and sorcerer. As long as the new idea maintains the standard design discipline, Empex can accommodate pretty much any idea. Empex Watertoys has been doing watertoys for 30 years. Tracy was originally in the park business and was tasked with replacing some old interactive water features that had been hand built by the original park maintenance personnel. Wyeth came to IAAPA and realized that no one was making interactive

water toys and realized this could be a lucrative business.

Raft and tube suppliers, **CPI**, **Zebe** and **ZPro** continue to supply the water park industry with the inflatable products and mats needed to partake in many of the new and exciting attractions the slide manufacturers continue to churn out. All three have also branched out to the amusement industry providing floatation collars for river raft rides as well as bumper car collars.

Wibit Sports was on hand again with its line of inflatable floating obstacle/play courses. Founded in 1996, Wibit invented the floating water park industry and several of its items were on display in its booth. The company is expanding its product line to appeal to guests of all ages and skill levels. Experienced guests in tip-top shape can find more challenges in aggressive "ninja-style" obstacle courses, some of which pit competitors against each other. For young adventurers in training, Wibit offers an easier, gentler obstacle course that will help young thrill-seekers-to-be develop balance and coordination while learning social interaction skills.

Wibit also made a name for itself with **WibitTag**, an obstacle course that spells out the name of a city, country or attraction, in letters floating on the water. One of the earliest and most recognizable was the WibitTag course for Dubai, that spelled out the name of the country in both English and Arabic lettering. Wibit's latest ambitious project was spelling out Indonesia in the waters of Secret Bay in Gilimanuk, Bali, Indonesia — currently the record holder for the largest inflatable water park in the world covering an area the size of five football fields and able to accommodate 600 visitors at a time.

One of the advantages of an inflatable floating obstacle

course is that it can easily be moved and reinstalled. Seasonal lakes or beach fronts can disassemble and store the product during the off season.

Arihant Water Park Equipment of India is continuing its aggressive marketing campaign in North America with a best price guarantee and longest warranty promise. The goal is to provide top quality rides for the lowest price.

Arihant was showing off two rides that were introduced last year, an activity waterplay structure named Treasure Ship and family raft ride called the Bay Series with Thunder Bay, TropicalBay and DragonBay. Designed to operate with two-to six-passenger tubes, the Bay series features a long, sloped, extra-wide U-shaped slide that is designed to maximize the side-to-side pendulum motion of the raft. Riders drop 20 feet into the side of the open flume, where the downhill slope and 180-degree turn can keep the raft rocking back and forth along the sides of the slide up to six times before finally ending in a splash pool.

aQuakita of Neuvo Leon, Mexico, is better known south of the border, but the company has been servicing the U.S. and European markets for many years with offices in Miami, Fla., and Madrid, Spain. One of its largest projects for 2020 is **Acqualinda** in Andradina, Brazil (covered on page 25 in this issue).

The water attractions industry continues to experience phenomenal growth with projects all over the world. Water parks, splash pads, swimming pools, aquatic centers and lake attractions such as floating obstacle courses and man-made surfing waves have proven to be fun, safe attractions appealing to a wide demographic. Large resorts can be viable vacation destinations and smaller facilities appeal to local audiences.



WhiteWater's record-breaking Lava Drifting spinning rapids ride (left) at Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park, China, took home a Brass Ring award. Wiegand's Slide Coaster (right) can launch riders from 0 – 30 mph in seconds. AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT



IAAPA EXPO 2019 – ORLANDO

Two industry legends inducted into IAAPA Hall of Fame

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) recognized two industry individuals whose work and accomplishments have made significant and lasting contributions to the global attractions industry by naming them in the IAAPA Hall of Fame.

The announcement was made during the association's convention and trade show last November in Orlando, Florida.

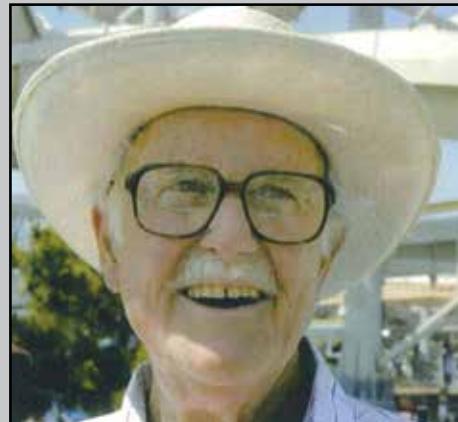
These individuals are **Frederick "Fred" Langford, WaterWorld Products**, New Jersey and **Alberto Zamperla, Antonio Zamperla S.p.A.**, Italy.

According to information released by IAAPA, Langford is an architect, inventor, designer, and dreamer, and is considered by many to be the creator of the modern day water slide.

Zamperla's ingenuity and creativity has produced many new concept rides with some becoming park staples around the world, such as Rocking Tug, Disko, Air Race, and Magic Bikes.



Alberto Zamperla



Frederick Langford

IAAPA Expo 2019 honors the industry's Brass Ring Award winners

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) presented its 2019 Brass Ring Awards during the association's convention and trade show in Orlando last November.

The Brass Ring Awards honor the excellence of the amusement industry by recognizing the best of all facets of the industry.

The following is a listing of those awards.

- **Top Family Entertainment Center (FEC) of the World:** Cinergy Entertainment Amarillo, Amarillo, Texas
- **Food and Beverage Excellence, Best New Menu Item, Annual Attendance Less than 1 Million:** "Unicorn Cotton Candy Tacos," Jake's Unlimited, Mesa, Arizona
- **Best New Menu Item, Annual Attendance More than 1 Million:** "BLT Panzanella Bowl," San Diego Zoo, San Diego, California
- **Games and Retail Excellence Best Plush:** "Porg," Disney Parks, Lake Buena Vista, Florida and Anaheim, California
- **Best Apparel:** "Children's Shaun the Sheep Hooded Sweat," Paradise Country, Gold Coast, Australia

- **Best Hard Good Item:** "Savi's Workshop – Handbuilt Lightsabers," Disney Parks, Lake Buena Vista, Florida and Anaheim, California
- **Best Visual Merchandising:** "Droid Depot: Custom Astromech Units," Disney Parks, Lake Buena Vista, Florida and Anaheim, California
- **Best Midway Game Operation:** "Morey's Piers Game Operation," Morey's Piers and Beachfront Water Parks, Wildwood, New Jersey

- **Judges Award, Best Plush Item:** "Little Ndaba," Naples Zoo, Naples, Florida, United States
- **Human Resources Excellence Best Employee Engagement Initiative, Annual Attendance Less than 1 Million:** Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

- **Best Employee Engagement Initiative, Annual Attendance More than 1 Million:** Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz, California
- **Best Employee Reward and Recognition Program, Annual Attendance More than 1 Million:** Europa-Park, Rust, Germany

- **Best Innovation in a Training Program, Annual Attendance Less than 1 Million:** Pacific National Exhibition, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
- **Best Innovation in a Training Program, Annual Attendance More than 1 Million:** Whiting's Foods on the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz, California

Live Entertainment Excellence

- **Best Atmosphere/Street Show Performance/Act:** "Green Army Drum Corps," Disney's Hollywood Studios, Disney Parks Live Entertainment, Orlando, Florida

- **Best Performer:** Annie Huckaba, Dollywood

Theme Park, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

- **Best Live "Edutainment" Show:** "Hershey's Unwrapped," Hershey's Chocolate World, Hershey, Pennsylvania

- **Best Theatrical Production, Annual Attendance More than 1 Million:** "Legend of Camel Bells," Huaxia Cultural Resort – Xi'an, Shanxi Province, China

- **Most Creative Christmas Show:** "Up on the Rooftop," Hersheypark, Hershey, Pennsylvania

- **Most Creative Halloween Haunt, Show, or Experience:** "Below," Walibi Holland, Biddinghuizen, Netherlands

- **Most Creative Multimedia Spectacular:** "Dancing Islands," Fantawild International Limited, Shenzhen, China

- **Most Creative Property-wide Event, Annual Attendance Less than 1 Million:** "Winterfest," Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

- **Most Creative Property-wide Event, Annual Attendance More than 1 Million:** "SeaWorld Christmas Celebration," SeaWorld Orlando, Orlando, Florida

- **Most Creative Show Featuring Animals:** "Sea Lions Tonite," SeaWorld Orlando, Orlando, Florida

- **Most Creative Sports/Stunt Show:** "Paddington on Ice – the Grand Voyage," Europa-Park, Rust, Germany

- **Spirit Award:** Katja Mack, Europa-Park, Rust, Germany

Excellence in Marketing

- **Best Digital Marketing Campaign:** "Snake," Gröna Lund, Stockholm, Sweden

- **Best Integrated Marketing Campaign:** "Skin Exhibit Integrate Campaign," California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California

- **Best Outdoor Advertisement:** "2018 San Diego Zoo Jungle Bells Campaign," San Diego Zoo Global, San Diego, California

- **Best Public Relations Campaign:** "Six Flags St. Louis – Coffin Challenge," Six Flags St. Louis, Eureka, Missouri, United States

- **Best Radio or Streaming Audio Commercial:** "Dino Roar Valley," Dino Roar Valley, Lake George, New York

- **Best Social Media Campaign:** "You Can't Do This At Home Campaign," Silver Dollar City, Branson, Missouri

- **Best Television or Digital Video Commercial, Annual Attendance Less than 250,000:** "Stupet – Where Heroes are Born," Rogaland Fritidspark AS – Kongeparken, Ålgård, Norway

- **Best Television or Digital Video Commercial, Annual Attendance 250,000 – 1 Million:** "Be A Kid With Your Kid," Silverwood Theme Park, Athol, Idaho

- **Best Television or Digital Video Commercial, Annual Attendance More than 1 Million:** "Skin Exhibit Advertising Campaign," California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California

Best Exhibit Award

- **Image Award Winner:** Bob's Space Racers, Inc.
- **Booth Size 100 – 199 Square Feet:** Party Cannon, Imagination Corporation

- **Booth Size 200 – 399 Square Feet:** Backyard X-Scapes Commercial

- **Booth Size 400 – 499 Square Feet:** Arihant Water Park Equipment

- **Booth Size 500 – 899 Square Feet:** Tree-Mendous Aerial Adventures

- **Booth Size 1,201 and Larger Square Feet, First Place:** Bob's Space Racers, Inc., Second Place: Polin Waterparks

Best New Product Awards

- **Major Ride/Attraction (Product cost of US \$5 million or more):** Intamin Ltd, Dueling LSM Triple Launch Coaster - Dueling Dragons

- **Major Ride/Attraction (Product cost of US \$2 to US \$5 million):** WhiteWater Attractions, Spinning Rapids Ride

- **Major Ride/Attraction (Product cost less than US \$2 million):** Zamperla, Nebulaz

- **Kiddie Ride/Attraction:** Treetop Trekking, TreeWalk Village

- **Water Park Ride/Attraction (Product cost of less than US \$1 million):** WhiteWater, Tailspin

- **Water Park Ride/Attraction (Product cost of US \$1 million or more):** ProSlide Technology, Inc., Dueling PIPElineBLAST / FlyingSAUCER

- **Patron Participation Ride/Attraction:** VR Coaster GmbH & Co. KG, VR Bumper Cars

- **Technology Applied to Amusements (Product or Service used by Consumers):** Pool Safe Inc.

- **Technology Applied to Amusements (Product or Service used by Facilities):** Dynamic Attractions, Loading / Unloading system

- **Food Services:** Vito Fryfilter, Vito 80 oil filter system - connect

- **Merchandising & Retail Products:** NXT Capture, NXT Spinning Video

- **Games & Devices (Arcade & Video Games and Equipment):** Bay Tek Entertainment, Connect 4 Hoops

- **Games & Devices (Midway Games and Equipment):** Bob's Space Racers, Inc., Hang Time

- **Services, Equipment & Supplies:** Redemption Plus, Redemption Plus Service Packages

- **Best New Product Concept Award: Major Ride Attraction First Place:** Wiegand Josef GMBH & Co. KG, SlideCoaster, Second Place: Delta Strike International Ltd., Genesis Laser Tag Equipment

- **Best New Product Concept Award: Major Ride/Attraction:** Holovis, Li-Fly

- **Best New Product Concept Award: Other Product/Service:** GateMaster Technology Corporation, ParkTrainer

- **Impact Award Winner:** ProSlide Technology Inc.

IAAPA EXPO 2019 – ORLANDO

Seen at IAAPA Expo 2019 in Orlando



One of the press announcements was made more thrilling by an appearance at Shaquille O'Neal at the Maurer Rides booth. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Chad Miller and Michael Graham of The Gravity Group take a seat in a concept coaster vehicle. "We had done trains, planes and automobiles, so we decided to sculpt a ship," said Graham. AT/TIM BALDWIN



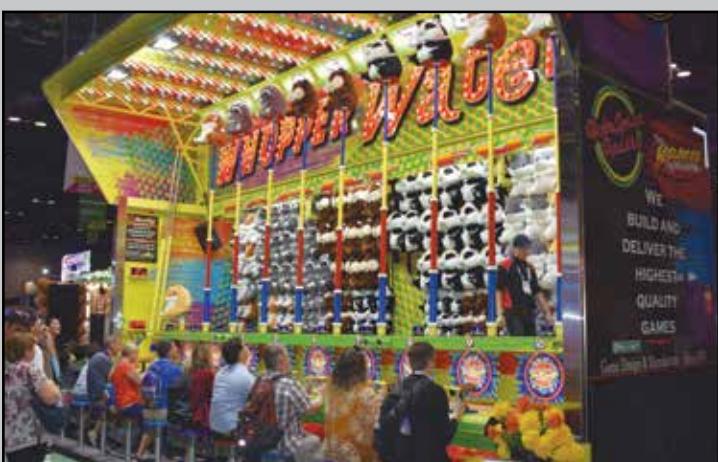
Sampling foods is a favorite perk of attending the Expo. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Board members of the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives hold a morning meeting prior to the opening of the show floor. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Various attendees visited the Amusement Today booth and discussed the change of floor plans at the 2020 Expo. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Bob's Space Racers always offers an exciting diversion during a hectic schedule. The company is celebrating 50 years. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



A Swiss flair accompanied Ride Engineers of Switzerland's press announcement. Mountain horns, accordions, yodeling and more made for a noteworthy announcement. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Rides 4 U's Earl Heller, Eric Anderson of Quassy Amusement Park and SBF/Visa's Michele Frison celebrate their sixth collaboration, 2020's Tidal Wave attraction. AT/TIM BALDWIN



IAAPA offered tours of the new headquarters to attendees. Shuttles ran from the convention center on multiple days. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Ron Berni (left) and Robbert Dekkers showcased WD Amusement Rides, exhibiting for the first time independently. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► **S&S details safety for testing Axis prototype — page 50 / Recreation Engineering marks 25 years — page 58**

Epic Waters upgrades flooring, enhancing safety and aesthetics

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — After taking awards and surpassing attendance expectations, **Epic Waters Indoor Waterpark** continues to refine its offerings. Celebrating its second anniversary this month, the private/public project has not rested on its laurels with its various successes.

Following its first year of operation, the facility took a good look at the offerings to its guests. Epic Waters opened an outdoor wave pool in late spring but analyzed more ways to move the property forward.

"We looked at two things: our overall guest satisfaction and what our detractors were saying," said **Richard Coleman**, president, **American Resort Management**. "We also looked at where our slips and falls happened. It came to light that what



ATD Concrete Coatings has created a new look underfoot at Epic Waters. AT/TIM BALDWIN

we expected from the original floor construction never ended up being what we thought it would be."

Epic Waters began a search for making the flooring not only a safer experience, but a more attractive one. The research

team looked at four different companies. After their search, management decided upon **ATD Concrete Coatings**.

Michael Hays, general manager, Epic Waters, had seen the company's work at the **Gaylord Texan Resort** and **SeaLife**

Aquarium, both in Grapevine, Texas. "I was impressed with the authenticity and the look of it," he said. "The flooring at SeaLife had a nice board and sand feel to it that looked very natural. At the Gaylord, it had a nice upscale look that we want-

ed here at Epic Waters."

ATD Owner and General Manager **Tony Hernandez** told *Amusement Today*, "They had an idea they were going after. It's always fun to do a theme park of some kind. The one thing I appreciated about this project was the cooperation from the staff. It was incredible, and that's not always necessarily the case. We couldn't do it all at once, so we broke it up in sections and it worked flawlessly."

"We're very pleased. We couldn't have done it any better," said Hays. "We were looking for that wood decking feel, and that's exactly what we got. The work was very top notch and the best customer service out of everyone we spoke with. And they stand by their work."

"We wanted to round out a resort feel here, and I think we've achieved those results,"

► **See FLOORING, page 43**

BrainTap brings digital health, wellness tech to amusement industry

ORLANDO — **BrainTap** was the new kid on the block at **IAAPA Expo 2019**. However, this company does not offer the latest thrill ride concept or even the latest fad in quick serve eats. No, this new kid is in the vanguard of health and wellness technology, a field that, until now, has been virtually mutually exclusive to the medical industry. Still, BrainTap, a North Carolina-based company has pulled a well-deserved seat up to the amusement industry table with their proprietary mindfulness technology that is currently used in over 2,000 doctors' offices.

If all this sounds a bit confusing, that's understandable. AT turned to **Dr. Patrick Porter**, neuroscience expert and founder of BrainTap for clarification on what exactly this technology offers. "Our goal is to optimize the experience for (amusement park) guests at these venues. Whether they need a burst of energy to hop on a few more rides, their kids are tired and acting out, or they just



need a good night's sleep at the hotel, brintapping is a quick and easy way to relax and reboot — anytime, anywhere," said Dr. Porter. He further explained that brintapping uses digital tools via an app to guide your mind from an awake, reactionary mind into an intuitive, creative state, then to a place where super-learning and healing can occur, all while simply relaxing in a zero-gravity chair and wearing the Braintap headset in conjunction with the app to receive sound and light therapy and guided visualizations. Backed by neuroscience and research, brintapping is a proven means to help people who experience high stress, difficulty sleeping, low energy and exhaustion. These symptoms are ever-present in the amusement industry, and BrainTap is looking to capitalize on amusement

parks' and attractions' desire to assist guests overcome stress and fatigue, and, therefore, spend more time (and money) at the venue. The company claims that a 20-minute session is equal to two-to-three hours of sleep.

BrainTap has gone one step further, however, than just reenergizing tired guests, by developing a program conjunction with the **Children's Opportunity for Brilliance** (a non-profit organization working with families of children with autism), to assist autistic children cope with the overwhelming world around them, including at parks and attractions. In a time where more and more parks are becoming certified autism centers with a "quiet room," BrainTap's technology offers additional, proven, cost-effective resources for those centers.

The headset adds sounds, light therapy and guided visualizations to the Braintap session.

AT/DAVID FAKE



Whether used for reenergizing parents, chaperones, or children or in conjunction with an autism quiet room, BrainTap's restorative technology will surely become a long-standing resource to the amusement industry. Find out more, and even take a free test run on BrainTap's app available on IOS or Android, or at braintap.com.

—David Fake



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Both wood plank and sand texture prevent slippery surfaces. The new surfacing at Epic Waters gives the water park more of a resort feel. AT/TIM BALDWIN

► FLOORING

Continued from page 42

said Coleman. "It's a much safer and a richer-looking environment. You might say it's more thematic."

The applied surface over the existing concrete was given texture. Epic Waters requested two themed looks: board decking and sand. The vision was to give the activity island in the center of the water park more of a beach feel. The sand look and feel were also placed at the entry to the lazy river. Elsewhere, throughout the entire indoor area, the appearance of boardwalk planks made the water park more aesthetically pleasing, providing a coastal resort feel.

The texture also provides a major improvement in preventing slips and falls.

"No matter how wet your feet are, it has slip resistance to it," said Coleman. "It's reducing the number of people who found the original concrete to be slippery."

To accomplish the major project, Epic Waters took four weeks during autumn to shut down for four days each week. Its most popular weekend days remained in operation. The entire park was then done in sections. Operation days lost for the project totaled 16.

"The wood plank design usually complements a project, but this is the largest we've ever done that pattern," said Hernandez. "We didn't have many challenges. It was a little more intricate to get around the slides, but it really worked out great. We didn't have any stumbling moments."

The enhancements came in at just under a quarter million dollars, according to Coleman.

"Our season passers noticed it immediately," he said.

Coleman expressed interest in applying the wood plank surface vertically to the lazy river wall, taking the appearance thematically beyond the smooth surface. That upgrade is currently in the planning.

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System developed to improve accessibility of rides, attractions

IBCCES, Gatemaster partner on registration-based I.D. technology

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — In recent years, the attractions and travel industries have been taking more steps to provide inclusive programs and accommodations for guests with special needs. However, many attractions are now running into difficulties when managing the registration and identification of guests that would benefit from these accommodations.

In seeking a solution, the **International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards** (IBCCES) has developed a digital accessibility card program.

The IBCCES Accessibility Card (IAC) is a free resource for individuals with cognitive disorders or physical impairments. The system, which was developed based on feedback IBCCES received from many of its **Certified Autism Center** partners, is designed to improve the guest experience, reduce abuse of ben-



efits, increase staff efficiency and streamline the check-in process.

When individuals register online and create an IAC profile, they can then present that registration at partner attractions and parks to access the individual benefits at each location. The system provides third-party verification and storage of all documentation needed to be eligible for certain special needs accommodations or benefits.

IBCCES teamed up on the project with **Gatemaster Technology**, a leading provider of point-of-sale and ticketing software serving more than 10 industries in 16 countries.

"We're excited to partner with Gatemaster and help provide this solution to more attractions worldwide," said **Myron Pincomb**, IBCCES



Creating a free resource for individuals with cognitive disorders and physical impairments, IBCCES has partnered with Gatemaster to provide a registration-based accessibility card solution for amusement parks, water parks and other attractions to help reduce abuse of benefits and increase guest satisfaction. COURTESY IBCCES

board chairman. "It's great to see the increase in locations that are taking steps to create more inclusive programs and experiences for guests — we don't want them to be slowed down by the management and oversight of those programs."

The IAC endeavor was a perfect fit for Broomfield, Colorado-based Gatemaster, the system provides a benefit for company partners looking for ways to manage their accessibility program registration.

"I'm proud to work with

IBCCES in supporting this important, yet often neglected, segment of attraction-goers," said **Sondra Shannon**, CEO of Gatemaster. "Our partnership makes it easier for our clients to take advantage of this amazing program and continue to improve the guest experience for everyone."

For nearly 20 years, IBCCES, a preferred partner of the **Autism Society**, has provided training and certification for education, healthcare and corporate professionals

worldwide.

The Gatemaster software system was developed by owners of family entertainment center facilities in 1994. It is unique in that all point-of-sale features are easily accessible from a single, all-inclusive program with mobile and native software versions.

Benefits and accommodations provided for guests with special needs will vary by attraction and are offered at each attraction's sole discretion.

•ibcces.org/gate-master

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Milestone reached on TRON Lightcycle / Run



In December, Walt Disney Imagineering and Magic Kingdom Park cast members celebrated a milestone in the construction of the TRON Lightcycle / Run attraction, when the final piece of the attraction's ride track was lowered into place. The coaster-style experience will allow riders to board a train of two-wheeled Lightcycles for a race through the digital frontier. A similar attraction exists at Shanghai Disneyland, where it opened in 2016. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT

PHTA education and course format updated

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance Board of Directors made determinations on PHTA education structure and course format plans for the future. Recommendations were made to address duplicate courses and certifications that came as a result of the unification of the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals (APSP) and the National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF). Most changes will go into effect in 2021.

"As the industry grows and evolves, adjustments to education are necessary," said Sabeena S. Hickman, CAE, PHTA president and CEO. "We are committed to providing robust and comprehensive education offerings that benefit all segments of the industry. We continue to work diligently to build upon the excellent courses people have come to know and expect from the organization."

Education updates will be announced in the coming months. PHTA education will be built and adjusted to provide courses that will help individuals working in the industry to grow their careers and be successful.

Cornerstone courses PPSO and CPO will coexist and will continue to meet state certification requirements for commercial pool operators. For 2020, both courses will be offered by PHTA PPSO- and CPO-certified instructors and classes will be held as scheduled. These courses will continue to evolve and will be used in a tiered design to create a

commercial track that will allow operators and employers the opportunity to grow and build their career path. A new format will be launched in 2021 that will consist of two levels of certification under the CPO umbrella.

The board approved the sunsetting of the Advanced Service Technician (AST) program. Through 2020, the course will be phased out and replaced with Certified Pool & Spa Service Technician (CST). Individuals currently AST certified are eligible to take the CST self-paced course and exam at no cost for one year after the official announcement phasing out AST. With more states recognizing CST certification for licensing, this allows students to be better positioned and in compliance with their state's requirements.

The NSPF Instructor Class will be fused with Train the Trainer in 2020. Aspiring Instructors will go through a revamped PHTA Instructor Assessment School, and after successfully passing the course they seek to teach, they will gain authorization to teach that particular course.

"PHTA is a manifestation of strength in unity," explained Chris Curcio, chairman of the PHTA board. "One of the greatest benefits of the unification of APSP and NSPF is the overall enhancement of industry education. We're putting the necessary elements in place to launch a revitalized educational platform, and I couldn't be more excited for our industry."

KumbaK

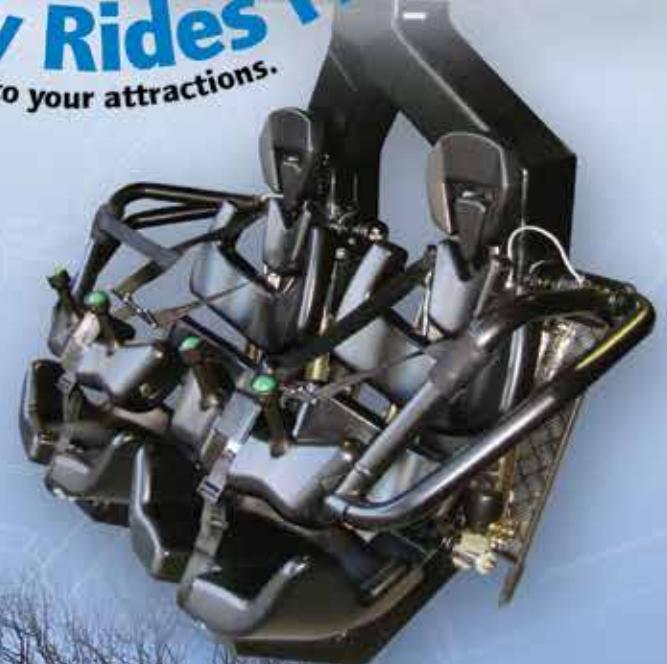
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NEWS & NOTES

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Best wishes for a happy and safe 2020 from AIMS International

The 2020 **AIMS Safety Seminar** kicks off the New Year on January 12 in Galveston, Texas, when more than 400 students and 100 instructors come together for five days of classes, networking and certification testing.

As a nonprofit organization, AIMS is dedicated to improving safety in the amusement industry through leadership in education. Our reputation for the excellent quality of our seminar program is due to our volunteer instructors — more than 100 industry professionals who share their expertise with our students in over 200 class hours during the week. This commitment to safety education and training in the amusement industry is priceless. We cannot begin to thank our instructors enough for the hours spent in preparation to bring students the latest, most informative information on safety issues and standards today.

We are also grateful to those who volunteer their time and expertise in assembling this outstanding group



of instructors and shape our seminar curriculum — the **AIMS Education Committee**. Led by AIMS Safety Seminar Manager, **Holly Coston**, the 2020 Safety Seminar Education Committee includes: **Dan Lebo, Monty Jasper, Kevin Garrison, Keith Fontenot, Maggie Thomas, Catie Christner, Liz Nemeth, Randy Wilke and Randy Vakeiner**.

Thank you to our 2020 Safety Seminar sponsors

On behalf of the AIMS board of directors and the entire amusement industry, we are especially grateful for those companies who support the work and mission of AIMS International as sponsors of the Safety Seminar.

At press time, our 2020 AIMS Safety Seminar sponsors include:

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AIMS membership meeting

The annual AIMS International membership meeting will be held Jan. 13 at 5:30 p.m. at the Hilton Galveston Island Resort. All members are invited to attend. Not a member? Join now and help further our efforts to promote safety in the amusement industry. Please visit our website for a description of our membership categories and application.

Feedback requested

Planning for the 2020 AIMS Safety Seminar will begin almost immediately after the 2020 Safety Seminar ends on Jan. 17. Please send your ideas and suggestions for classes and other improvements to info@aimsintl.org. We want to hear from you!

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by AT & AIMS.



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Dana Wyatt
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GCII crew readies the Texas Stingray in San Antonio



SAN ANTONIO — Great Coasters International, Inc. (GCII), celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2020, is hard at work on SeaWorld San Antonio's new Texas Stingray coaster. Scheduled to open in April, the structure uses Brazilian Ipe (darker wood, shown above left) in the high-stress areas for better durability. At right is the full construction crew, with GCII founder Clair Hain seated in front. AT/GARY SLADE

Maryland State Fair powered by solar electricity

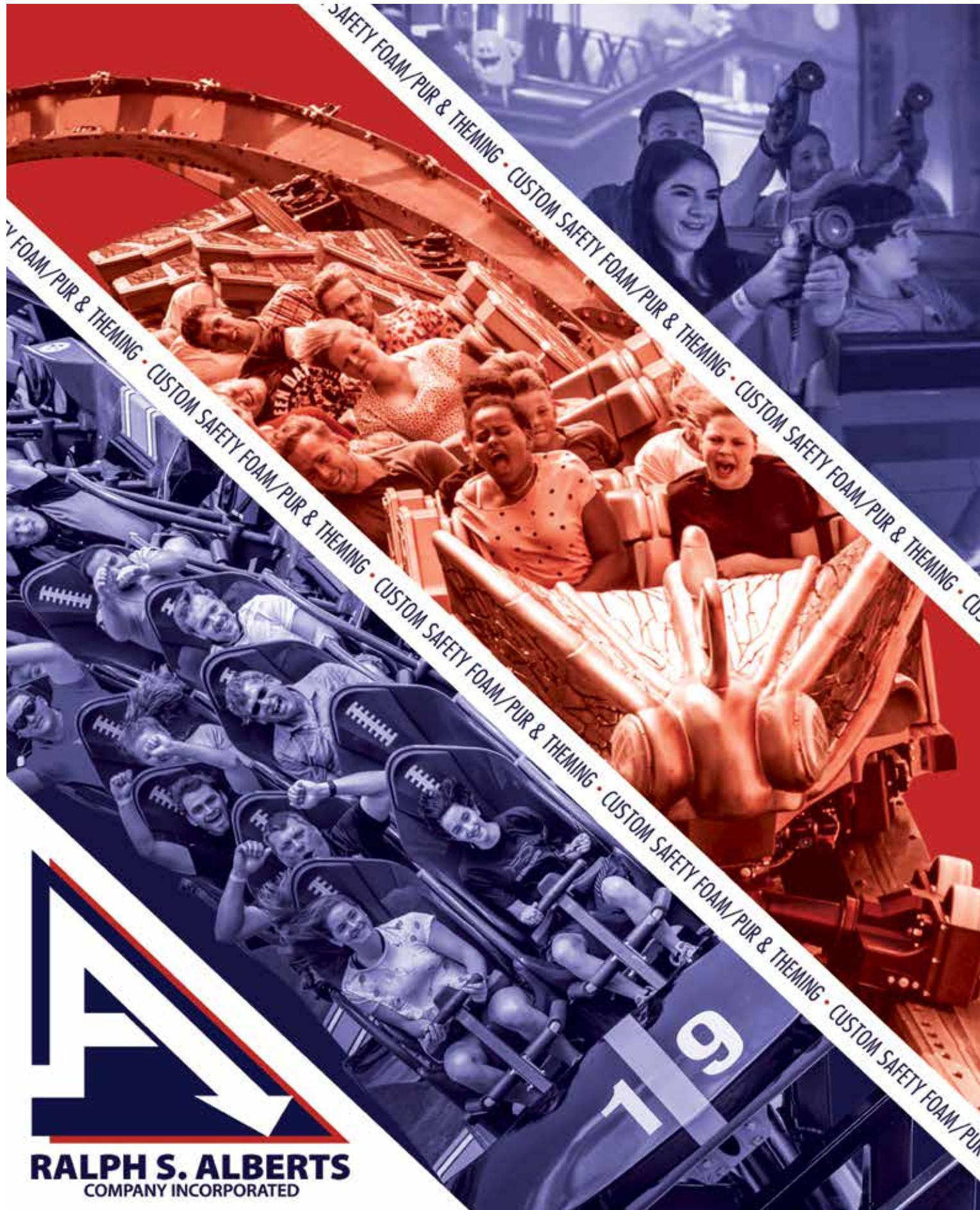
TIMONIUM, Md. — The Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, Inc., has decided to go solar. Members of the management team and board of directors reviewed solar opportunities for the **Maryland State Fairgrounds** from a half dozen companies and unanimously selected the Baltimore County company **SolarGaines** to install solar panels on the Cow Palace roof as well as the Sheep, Swine, and Goat Barn roof.

"SolarGaines is estimating that, based on our current rate, the cumulative electricity savings on the Maryland State Fairgrounds over the initial 15-year period would be substantial," said Chairman of the Board **Gerry L. Brewster**. "Obviously, these savings are tremendously important to the future financial well-being of the Maryland State Fairgrounds."

The partnership with Solar-Gaines will include the installation of a weather station to gauge temperature, irradiance, humidity, precipitation, pressure and wind. The monitoring display and kiosk software, which promotes the fairgrounds' adoption of solar energy to help educate the public on how to reduce their carbon footprint, aligns with the educational mission of the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, Inc.

"This great opportunity is just one example of the progress that the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society is making to improve our stewardship of the environment," added Brewster.

"We are proud of all that the Maryland State Fair staff and board of directors have accomplished to date," said Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society General Manager **Andy Cashman**. "We will continue to strive to make the Maryland State Fair-grounds the best it can possibly be for our annual visitors."





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Safety is top priority in testing new coaster prototype at S&S

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

NORTH LOGAN, Utah — When it comes to riders, it is undeniable that safety is the number one priority of park operators and ride manufacturers. When it comes to engineering, manufacturing and testing of new ride concepts, safety protocols may not always be such a strict rule of thumb. **S&S Worldwide** has established impressive protocols in testing its new, innovative roller coaster, Axis. *Amusement Today* found it noticeably front and center during a recent visit.

The test track for the new coaster had multiple safety requirements in place before the next test launch could take place.

"Out of respect for the people [involved], there is nothing worth doing that could potentially hurt workers," said **Merin Swasey**, manager, product development. "Because of the nature of our air-launch system, we have safeties in place."

Being a short section of test



Once the test vehicle was positioned, sensors had to indicate that straps were in place in proper locations. AT/TIM BALDWIN

track, the prototype model did not come with full sets of brakes as a finished project would. To help position the vehicle, ride operators use straps to gently move the car. Before it could be tested — and launched — again, sensors had to verify that straps were returned to their proper place. So sophisticated is the sensor array that specific hooks and items must be in the correct sensor for it to confirm safety procedures.

"It has to be that hook in that location, or it won't work," said Swasey. "The loading platform also has to be pulled all the way back, and we have to see those sensors. The restraints have their own sensors as well."

Although the ride was erected on a simple field adjacent to the S&S facility, yellow lines were physically painted on the ground to visually indicate a clearance envelope not only for onlookers,

but also those operating the prototype. Along the launch path, there are redundant sensors in multiple locations to ensure that air pressure is correct for a proper launch.

"We know for sure the conditions of everything," said Swasey. "We have a lot of backlog that goes into that."

In acknowledgement of safety within the industry Engineering Director **Paul Lattin** said, "This is something the F24 committee is working on continually. We have focused specifically on our design analysis, hazard assessment and risk analysis. On this ride, we talked about specific risks we would introduce by doing this ride on site. So not only are we thinking about design risk analysis, but also operator and user risk analysis. Where energy sources become a problem ... where people will be in potentially hazardous situations and how we can mitigate each one of those."

From these learning opportunities and thoughtful approaches, S&S can not only create a safer product at the facility, but also

carry forward these best practices to the customer.

"I think years and years ago — and I can't speak to how things were or weren't designed — I think there was an assumption that the parks or the operators had to perform the safety, that the safety was on them," said **Jason Mons**, COO. "And that could make for quick decisions. Safety has to be designed and engineered in from the very beginning."

Management agreed that all manufacturers are pushing the envelope more and more each year. They emphasized that when safety doesn't start with the design, people are placed closer and closer to that envelope.

"By incorporating safety from the very beginning, you're doing your best to know the system itself is inherently safe," said Mons. "If additional safety is provided by the operators, that is above and beyond what your engineers already anticipated."

"This is the most organized and safest prototype that we've done," Swasey told AT.

AS WE CELEBRATE 25 YEARS IN BUSINESS
S&S WORLDWIDE WANTS TO SAY

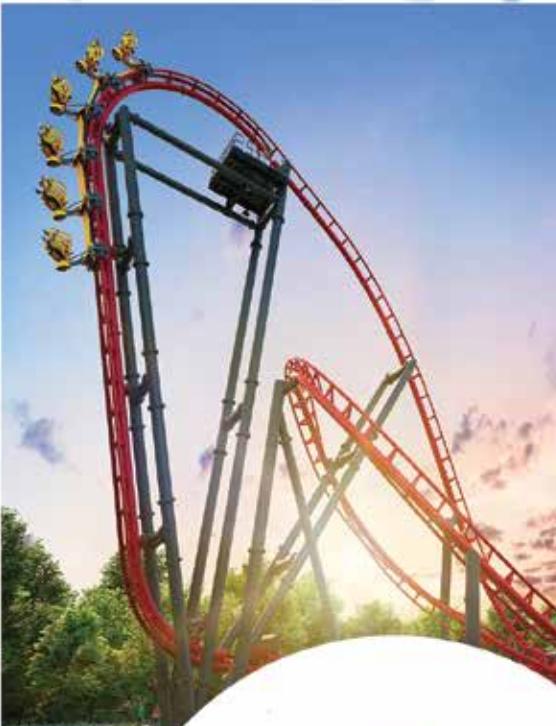
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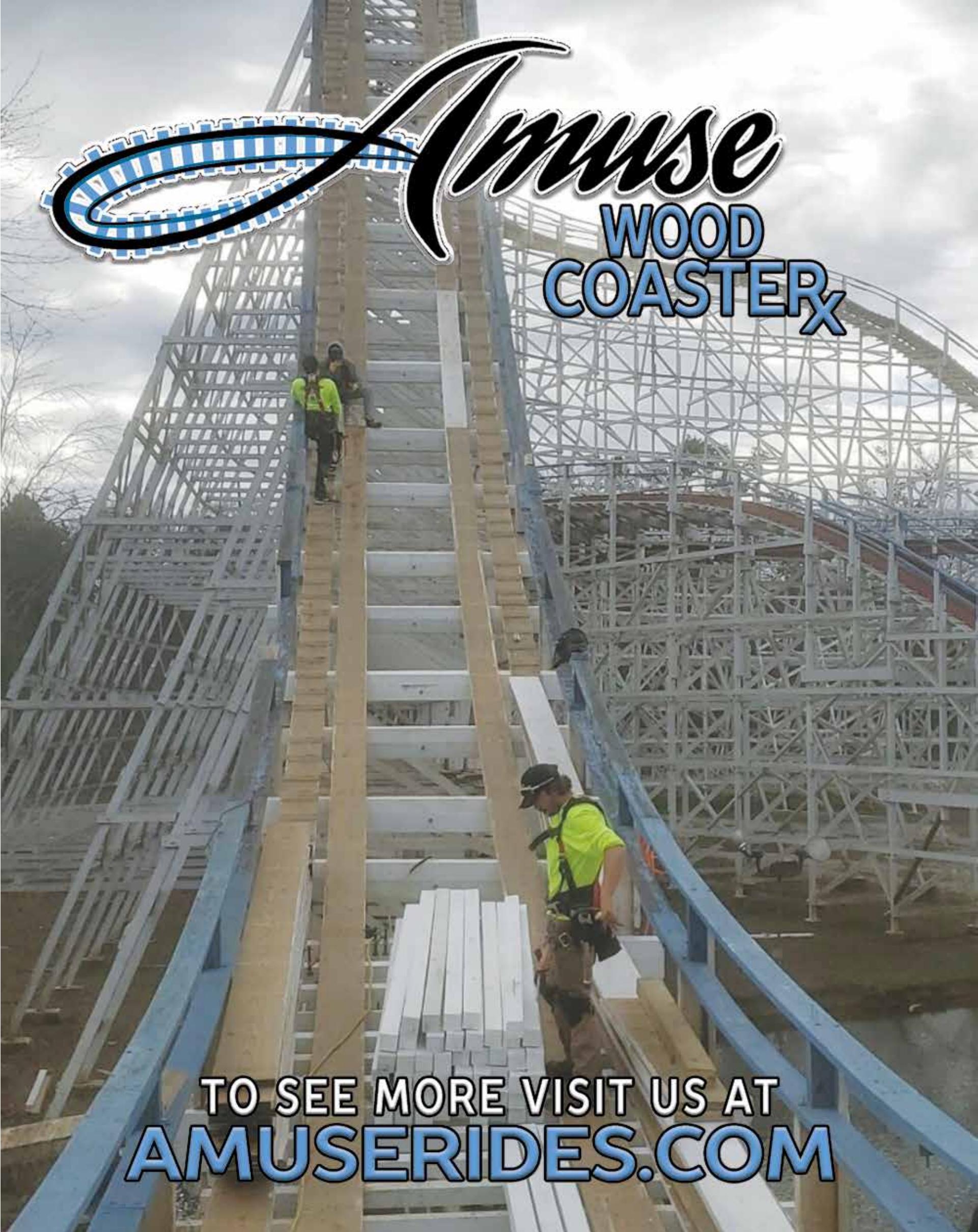
S&S WORLDWIDE

Off-season wooden coaster refurbishments underway



ATLANTA, Ga. — Idaho-based Amuse Rides is rebuilding several wooden coasters throughout North America this offseason. Above, the company's crews are already hard at work at refurbishing the Great American Scream Machine at Six Flags Over Georgia. The lift hill and first drop to the top of next hill are undergoing seven to nine layers of complete track and ledger replacement.

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Torqueedo electric propulsion systems restores Retro Boat Rentals

CRYSTAL LAKE, Ill. — When **John Sharar** was contemplating starting **Retro Boat Rentals** — a vintage boat rental business in Saugatuck, Michigan — using restored fiberglass boats from the 1950s and '60s, he knew he had one major problem to solve. He knew he didn't want customers to have to deal with the smoky, noisy, two-stroke outboard motors from that era that would be too unreliable to operate successfully.

At the same time, he wanted to keep the original motors, to go along with the look of the jet-age fins, retro-cool paint jobs and chrome details, and not spoil the faithfully restored beauties by hanging new modern outboards on their transoms.

Researching the options, he turned to **Torqueedo, Inc.**, the manufacturer of marine electric propulsion.

"John came up with the idea of removing the old gas motor from its casing and replacing it with a compact Torqueedo motor coupled to a custom-designed sail drive pod," said **Steve Trkla**, pres-

ident of Torqueedo, Inc. "He attended Torqueedo training and worked with Torqueedo engineers to modify various motor brands. The electric motor is driven by a Torqueedo lithium-ion battery in the boat."

"From the outside, you can't tell it's not the original outboard. The steering wheel turns the outboard unit just like the original. The only difference is that you have a quiet, easy-to-operate electric motor you push a button to operate," Sharar added.

A 1960 Crownline was the first to be outfitted with the Torqueedo package in 2016, with several other boat models following. They became an instant hit with renters who fell in love with the experience of gliding around in style, enjoying the quiet, fresh air and scenic beauty. The company had 700 rentals in the first year and 2,000 the next year. The company has since added more to the Retro Boat Rentals fleet in Saugatuck. The boats vary in size and weight, so Sharar tailors the Torqueedo electric systems for each boat

to provide eight to 10 hours of run-time between charges.

"The Retro Boat Rentals operation is a perfect example of how Torqueedo is bringing clean, green electric marine propulsion to harbors, lakes and waterways around the country," said Trkla. "Increasingly, local authorities are placing restrictions on internal combustion engines to keep their air and waters clean and reduce noise levels. For instance, the city of San Antonio recently deployed a new fleet of 43 tour boats with Torqueedo outboards."

Buoyed by the initial success of Retro Boat Rentals in Saugatuck, Sharar is branching out to take his unique business model to a wider market.

Since starting the business in 2016, Sharar has amassed one of the largest collections of rare vintage fiberglass boats in the country. His business model has expanded from a boat rental operator to a boat provider, leasing them to other operators in the country. He recently formed a partnership with a company in Austin, Texas, and is jointly working for approvals to operate

a fleet of boats on the city's urban waterways on Ladybird Lake. He is also leasing boats to support rental operators in Chicago and Milwaukee, and is working on a partnership with the **Michigan Maritime Museum** in South Haven to offer rare Michigan-made fiberglass boats from the 1950s. He plans to rotate the restored boats from location to location to give customers at each site something fresh and new.

"We're proud that we've created such a positive customer experience, but even more proud that we've had a positive impact on the environment," Sharar said. "The original outboard motors of the mid-century era were heavy polluters. Working with Torqueedo, we've transformed the boats for the modern eco-friendly age, and the boats themselves are recycled. In many cases they would have ended up in landfills. Not only have we saved the boats from that demise, they've been repowered and repurposed thanks to Torqueedo motors."

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Before



After



Before



After

Safety, maintenance and operations at the forefront of IAAPA Expo 2019



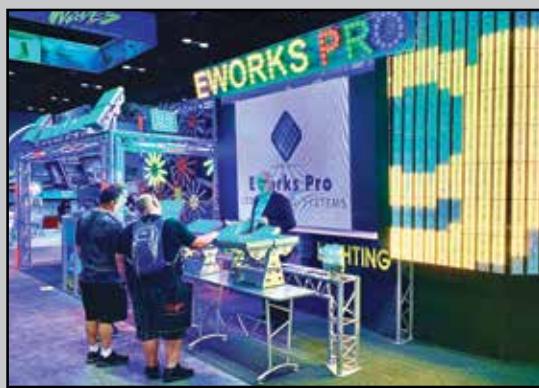
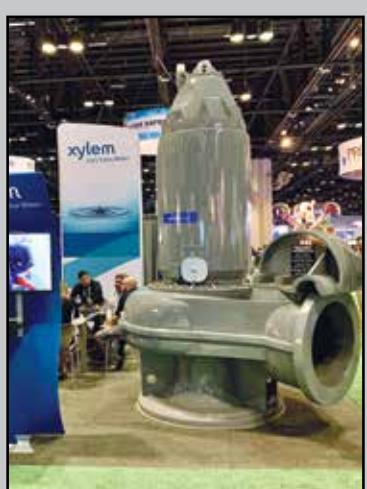
Pearl Weave Safety Netting (left) is mainly a supplier of construction netting since 1934. However, their netting has been used in the amusement industry for ride debris barriers and enclosures. Tritech Fall Protection Systems, Inc. (right), utilizes a patented hook and guide-wire system that can be applied to both construction/maintenance and emergency evacuation of attractions. AT/DAVID FAKE



Pump manufacturers Xylem (right) displayed the world's largest submersible pump. Herborner Pumps of Germany (far right) also displayed directional water transfer/movement pumps. Renold (above) manufactures a large range of industrial chains, gearboxes and couplings specifically for use in power transmission, lifting, conveying and processing applications. AT/DAVID FAKE



Several suppliers of urethane, rubber and metal wheels displayed their different product styles, including Maclan (above and upper left), LUC Urethanes (lower left), and Uremet Corporation (below). Maclan manufactures new roller coaster wheels, relines used roller coaster wheels and custom-builds products for the mining industry. It has been manufacturing urethane and rubber products for a variety of industries since 1975. AT/DAVID FAKE



Eworks Pro (above left) and Camaleon LED (above right) showcased their LED lighting products with large displays at the show. AT/DAVID FAKE





Fiberbuilt of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. (above), displayed multiple products at IAAPA Expo 2019, including the new ShadeCraft Blossom umbrella that incorporates cordless solar power, voice/button/app control, motorized open/close, controlled lighting, Bluetooth speakers, device charging and environmental sensors for auto wind closure. AT/DAVID FAKE

Expo attendees were given an opportunity to take Braintap's mindfulness and recovery technology, for a test spin. Braintap's proprietary sensory therapy sends sound and light pulses through the ear meridians and to the brain that reduce stress, worry and irritability. Just 20 minutes of therapy is equivalent to a two to three-hour nap, allowing guests to "Play. Reboot. Repeat." AT/DAVID FAKE



Max-R's fully customizable indoor/outdoor site furnishings are made from 97% recycled lumber (top and above). Busch Systems (below) has been manufacturing a complete line of recycling bins, containers, carts and composters since 1985. Premier Polysteel (bottom) provides Plastisol-coated steel commercial outdoor furniture that is built to withstand all environmental conditions and will never rust. AT/DAVID FAKE



CenterEdge Software's Facility Management POS software provides management tools for the amusement, entertainment and FEC industries that encompass all aspects of their entertainment facilities or attractions in a single, easy-to-use platform utilizing plug-and-play software and best-in-class hardware. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



Recreation Engineering marks 25 years of promoting safety

Ride inspection and maintenance firm has clients around world

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

PREScott VALLEY, Ariz. — Ensuring amusement ride safety is all in a day's ultra-focused, frequently intense and always crucial work for **Recreation Engineering, Inc.** (REI). And it has been for the last quarter century.

Specializing in inspection, maintenance, certification, training, litigation support, and mechanical design and testing, the company, led by principals **Brian D. King, P.E.**, president, and **Jeffery W. Abendshien**, vice president, lists among its international clients many of the attraction industry's best-known companies — from theme and amusement parks to ride manufacturers, resort operators and entertainment producers. REI celebrated its 25th anniversary in October.

"The responsibility we don't take lightly at all, and we carry that around with us," said King in an interview with



Celebrating Recreation Engineering, Inc.'s 25th anniversary in San Diego in October were staff members (at right, from left) Austin Muff, Jan King, Bart Mueller, Brian King, Jonathan Hinds, Kevin Garrison, Jeff Abendshien and Jesse Monreal. In the field, Abendshien (above) conducts a ride visual inspection.
COURTESY RECREATION ENGINEERING, INC.

Amusement Today. "But we also know that after 25 years, we're doing the work right."

King founded the company, originally known as **Triodyne Recreation Engineering, Inc.**, in 1994 in partnership with the owners of **Triodyne, Inc.**, a Chicago-area firm specializing in forensic engineering and expert engineering testimony for litigation.

"I was running the testing laboratory for Triodyne, but I wanted to get back into the amusement ride business because my first job at 16 was working for **Santa's Village** in Dundee, Illinois," said King about his creation of the more ride-specific company offshoot. "I was a ride operator for one season at the park, and for six seasons after



that, while going to school, I was the grounds maintenance manager. So, in my mind, I had never really left the business."

While with Triodyne, King, an **Illinois Institute of Technology** mechanical engineering graduate, also did part-time work for **Coulter Consulting Group, Inc.**, which handled inspections for state

and county fairs. There, he befriended Jeff Abendshien, then Coulter's senior vice president.

Like King, Abendshien, who attended **Ohio State University College of Engineering** in Columbus, had come up through work at an amusement park — **Zoo Amusement Park**, then owned by the **Columbus Zoo** (and later bought and renamed **Wyandot Lake** by **Funtime, Inc.**, owner of **Geauga Lake** and **Darien Lake** parks). "I was a ride operator for about a month before I switched over to ride maintenance — I was just not cut out to be a button pusher," he told AT. He became the park's first safety manager in 1983 and continued in that role for three years until he was hired by Coulter.

In the fall of 1994, Abendshien left Coulter to become Triodyne Recreation Engineering's fourth partner.

"I wanted to focus my efforts more on permanent rides and attractions, including large-scale attractions," Abendshien said of his decision to join King's new company. "If you take a look at both industries — portable and park — they're one and the same, but the equipment that is used by each of those entities is vastly different."

In 1999, with a rapidly growing clientele, King and Abendshien bought out their other two partners and dropped Triodyne from the company name. REI was on a roll.

A jackpot in Vegas

In business, timing can be everything. Soon after their company launched, King and Abendshien were fortunate to pick up clients in Las Vegas — and begin developing a working relationship with the city and

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► See REI, page 59



At the office and in the field: Recreation Engineering staff members undertake a document review, perform a railroad ride track inspection and assist with the installation of a virtual reality coaster overlay. COURTESY RECREATION ENGINEERING, INC.

►REI
Continued from page 58

Nevada's Clark County — just as the gambling mecca was ramping up a mid-1990s promotional push emphasizing family-oriented resorts and amusements.

REI's first major consulting job on a new installation was a boat ride at a themed hotel. This led to many other Sin City contracts, each presenting special challenges and needing novel solutions — such as an evening action spectacular in front of a Strip hotel that required underwater machinery inspections.

"That was the boom time in Las Vegas for rides and attractions, and we established a niche market there," Abendshien said. "Clark County is probably one of the most intense code-compliance locations in the country as far as getting a ride installed and operating. Having had kind of an early working knowledge of that gave us a leg up on some of our competition, and since then, we've ended up doing most of the major amusement projects in the city. In fact, I'm working on one today."

REI's Vegas business inroads were only part of the company's first-year success. By the end of 1995, it had about 20 clients, including a top flat ride manufacturer seeking assistance with prototype testing in Southern California, across the U.S., and in Canada, the Philippines and Malaysia. "We hit the ground running and have not stopped since," Abendshien said.

There have been memorable adventures along the way.

King recalled being contacted by a marketing company planning to promote a new product with a large portable Ferris wheel that was late for delivery. "They said, 'We don't know anything about the amusement industry. Can you go take a look at the wheel and tell us what's going on?'"

King visited the supplier and was appalled by what he found. "Not only was the ride

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Superior Trampoline Manufacturing made a preferred partner by Sumba platform



BELLEFONTAINE, Ohio — Sumba, developer of a park operations and risk management platform for FEC maintenance and inspections, has announced that Superior Trampoline Manufacturing (STM) is a preferred partner for the replacement parts ordering function within its service operating system. The Sumba platform is customizable to a park's operations and includes a comprehensive digital inspection checklist, verifiable documentation of inspections, and an automated solution for ordering failed or replacement parts. Through the platform, users can order replacement parts for their attractions or equipment. STM's catalogue of trampoline and adventure park replacement parts will be integrated within Sumba's operating solution platform to utilize during a park's in-house inspection and maintenance program. COURTESY SUMBA

►REI Continued from page 59

never going to be delivered on time, it was never going to be delivered," he said. "It was the biggest chop job I ever saw. So I reported back to our client that it didn't look good, that the thing was going to kill somebody the way it was being put together. They stopped the project."

It was just one example of King sharing in his client's sense of relief. "You peel back your shirt and you have a big 'S' on your chest when you feel like, 'Oh, I think I just saved somebody's life.'"

Abendshien recounted a long-ago episode wherein the big 'S' meant "serendipitous."

"A park overseas had purchased a used roller coaster they were excited to roll out, and they needed an inspection and certification on it," he said. "The manufacturer had not been in business for a while, so there were not a whole lot of people out there who were knowledgeable about this particular attraction. Fortunately, I was one of them."

Upon visiting the site, Abendshien immediately recognized the assembled ride. "It was a coaster that I had inspected 10 years prior, and condemned, at a location in the U.S. It had structural fatigue cracks all over it, and I had tagged each one of them for the ride's previous owner. There were still 100 of my old tags hanging on this thing in the same spots."

He was able to give the park a quick rundown on the ride's history. "I showed them, within a few hours, what all the issues were and that it was not repairable. And of course, that coaster didn't open. If the park hadn't had the foresight to reach out to somebody that was knowledgeable about that particular piece of equipment — and then coincidentally, have first-hand knowledge about it — it may have opened, because that particular country had no ride regulations."

"I was sad to condemn the coaster, but happy that I was able to possibly prevent something catastrophic. You know you're doing it for the right reasons — you're helping the general public and protecting your industry."

Solidifying standards

Abendshien said industry safety worldwide has improved substantially in the two decades since that experience.

"From the ethical, morality and monetary standpoints, people want to operate safely no matter where they are," he said. "What has changed in the last few years is the knowledge of what's safe and what's not, and the

resources for being able to operate more safely. Codes and standards [such as ASTM, EN and ISO] have become more harmonized, and they've also become more readily accessible to most countries. On top of that, the resources for getting engineering or inspections or government oversight has increased dramatically."

Both Abendshien and King, a past chairman of **ASTM International**'s F-24 Committee for Amusement Rides and Devices, have made contributions to ASTM standards, NAARSO and industry safety generally through their field work, research, special projects and instruction at industry seminars and events. (They are instructing again at the **AIMS Safety Seminar**, Jan. 12-17, in Galveston, Texas. Visit aimsintl.org for class topics and schedule.)

"ASTM is a place to share your safety passion with others," said King, who was honored with an Award of Merit by the F-24 Committee in 2016. "The committee now is 1,000 people. When I was chairman, it was only 400. More and more people are interested."

More people, and more ASTM task groups, means more can be done to address and improve safety quickly when the latest attractions are introduced.

"Every time something new comes along, ASTM is pretty much on it, because most of the members have their finger on the pulse of the industry and what's coming down the pike," Abendshien said. "They're very proactive about trying to get standards promulgated for those specific, unique attractions. And ASTM standards are never finished — they're an ongoing, evolving product, and in some cases, they're updated several times in a year."

For both men, there is great responsibility and pride in their work.

"We have to be on our 'A' game at all times. If we omit something from an inspection or a design, we would never forgive ourselves," Abendshien said. "That keeps us on our toes and keeps us sharp. When you finish a project and see that first kid that gets off that ride, and he's got a big smile on his face, that's what makes it all worthwhile. You know that you and your team have done a good job. That's why I get up every morning and continue doing the same thing we've been doing for 25 years."

"We don't know everything, but we're always learning — especially with the new technologies out there," said King. "It's a super-exciting time to be in this business."

• recreationengineering.com

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Six Flags Discovery Kingdom lights up holidays with solar power

VALLEJO, Calif. — Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, in partnership with sPower and Borrego Solar Systems, made the official switch to solar power at a special event to kick off the park's 12th annual Holiday in the Park, the first to be powered by renewable energy.

The event included remarks by Congressman Mike Thompson and Vallejo Mayor Bob Sampayan, who flipped the giant, ceremonial switch, officially flipping the park to solar energy and turning on millions of twinkling lights to the delight of everyone in attendance. Moving forward, 80% of the park's energy usage will be powered by one of the largest solar carport installations in the country.

"We are thrilled to be introducing the nation's first solar-powered Holiday in the Park events," said Six Flags' Senior Vice President of U.S. Park Operations Tom Iven. "Our elves go all out to deck the largest halls, trim the tallest trees and turn millions of lights on extra bright to welcome our guests to the biggest and most immersive holiday celebration anywhere in the world. A visit to Holiday in the Park is on everyone's wish list this season."

The 7.5 megawatt solar carport, built over the main guest parking lot, produces 11.9 million kilowatt hours of energy annually. The solar facility will offset 8,400 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents each year, the equivalent of taking 1,800 cars off the road.

Six Flags Discovery Kingdom is the first theme park on the West Coast powered by solar energy and employed over 360 individuals in association with the construction of the project.



The 65-foot Christmas tree at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom is now solar powered.
COURTESY
SIX FLAGS DISCOVERY KINGDOM



Congressman Mike Thompson, Vallejo City Mayor Bob Sampayan and others officially flipped the switch (left) to solar energy. The 7.5 megawatt solar carport at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom (right) is one of the largest solar carport installations in the country. COURTESY SIX FLAGS DISCOVERY KINGDOM



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CALENDAR

2020

AIMS International 2020 Safety Seminar

Jan. 12-17, 2020

Galveston, Texas • (714) 425-5747

aimsintl.org

IAAPA FEC Summit 2020

Jan. 26-29, 2020 • Stone Mountain, Georgia

Atlanta Evergreen Marriott

iaapa.org

NAARSO 2020 Safety Fourn

Jan. 26-31, 2020 • Myrtle Beach, S.C.

(813) 661-2779 • www.naarso.com

International Ride Training

Ride Camp 2

Feb. 4-7, 2020 • Foley, Ala.

ridetraining.com

International Independent

Showman's Association 2019 Trade Show

Feb. 5-8, 2020 • Gibsonton, Fla.

(813) 677-3590 • gibtownshowmensclub.com

Northwestern Showmen's Club

40th Annual Safety Seminar

Feb. 17-20, 2020 • Portland, Ore.

(503) 761-0989 • nwshowmensclub.com

Regionalized NAARSO Outreach Safety School

Feb. 18-20, 2020 • Atlantic City, N.J.

(732) 240-0000 • naarso.com

Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar

Feb. 25-27, 2020 • Harrisburg, Ps.

(561) 758-3266 • paridesafety.com

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March 2-4, 2020 • Sandusky, Ohio

(216) 765-3610 • safetyconf.com

IAFE Impact & Impressions Specialty Seminar

March 5-7, 2020 • Columbus, Ohio

fairsandexpos.com

Amusement Expo International and Operations Conference

March 9-11, 2020 • New Orleans, La.

amusementexpo.org

IAAPA Expo Asia 2020

June 9-11, 2020 • Macao

iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia

2020 Golden Ticket Awards

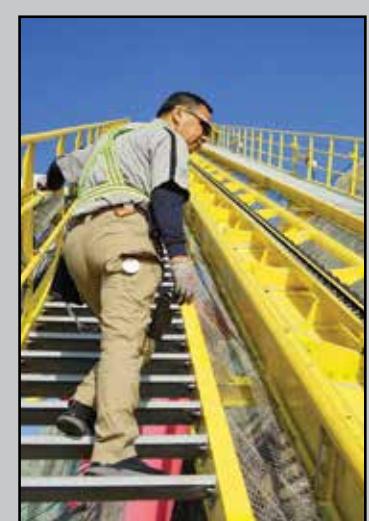
Sept. 11-12, 2020 • San Antonio, Texas

goldenticketawards.com

Have a Calender event listing you want to share?

Email it to: editorial@amusementtoday.com

Annual safety audit at Hong Kong's Ocean Park completed



Inspectors from LJM & Associates worked alongside a team of eight inspectors (left) to complete the extensive annual safety audit of Hong Kong's Ocean Park. The teams went over all of the popular park's attractions, including the magnificent Ferris wheel (top middle) as well as the Hair Raiser (above and right) and Arctic Blast (top right) roller coasters.

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Vortex opens new headquarters, expands manufacturing capabilities

MONTRÉAL, Quebec — Vortex Aquatic Structures International has relocated to larger offices in the same Montreal community of Pointe-Claire to expand its manufacturing capabilities.

With over 220,000 square feet of space, the new facility is three times larger than its prior location and can handle the growing global demand for the company's products while maintaining lead times and quality. Vortex is expanding its team to keep up with increasing demand.

The new facility includes a design studio and product testing labs to support Vortex's innovative culture. Known for its creativity, innovation and pioneering products, Vortex will be able to design and produce bigger, more complex parts to meet demand for boundary-pushing solutions.

Office spaces have been designed to enable the company's collaborative work environment and to stimulate creativity. To accommodate employees and promote work-life balance, an in-house fitness center is part of the future plans.

With sustainability as one of its core values, the company substantially renovated and modernized the former Ford Motor Co. factory, upgrading all mechanical, electrical, ventilation and roofing systems with high energy efficiency systems.

The move comes as the company prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2020. **Stephen Hamelin**, president of Vortex International, launched the organization in 1995. This is the fourth time that Vortex has moved to accommodate its growth.

"Our new facility will help us expand our capabilities in all facets of our business including manufacturing, R&D and sales," Hamelin said. "We are investing in new equipment, technology and our people to prepare the organization for the next 25 years."

"This new location allows us to remain in Montreal, the city where we started and a place with an abundance of talented people in many disciplines. These talents have been one of the key contributors to our success over the years. We are also proud to have transformed a classic, 50-year-old industrial property into a modern state-of-the-art facility."

vortex-intl.com

With over 220,000 square feet of space, Vortex Aquatic Structures International has renovated a former Ford Motor Co. factory in Montreal into the company's new headquarters.
COURTESY VORTEX INTERNATIONAL



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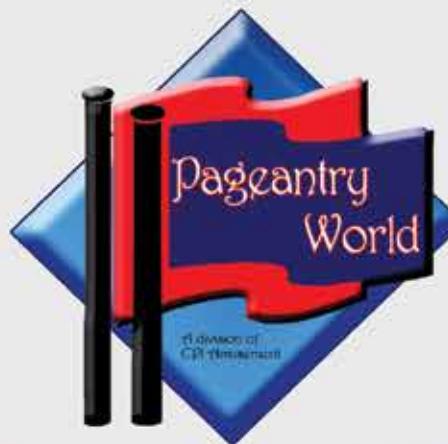
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